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The Atlantic Monthly

OCTOBER 1999

BY **PETER F. DRUCKER**

BEYOND the Information Revolution



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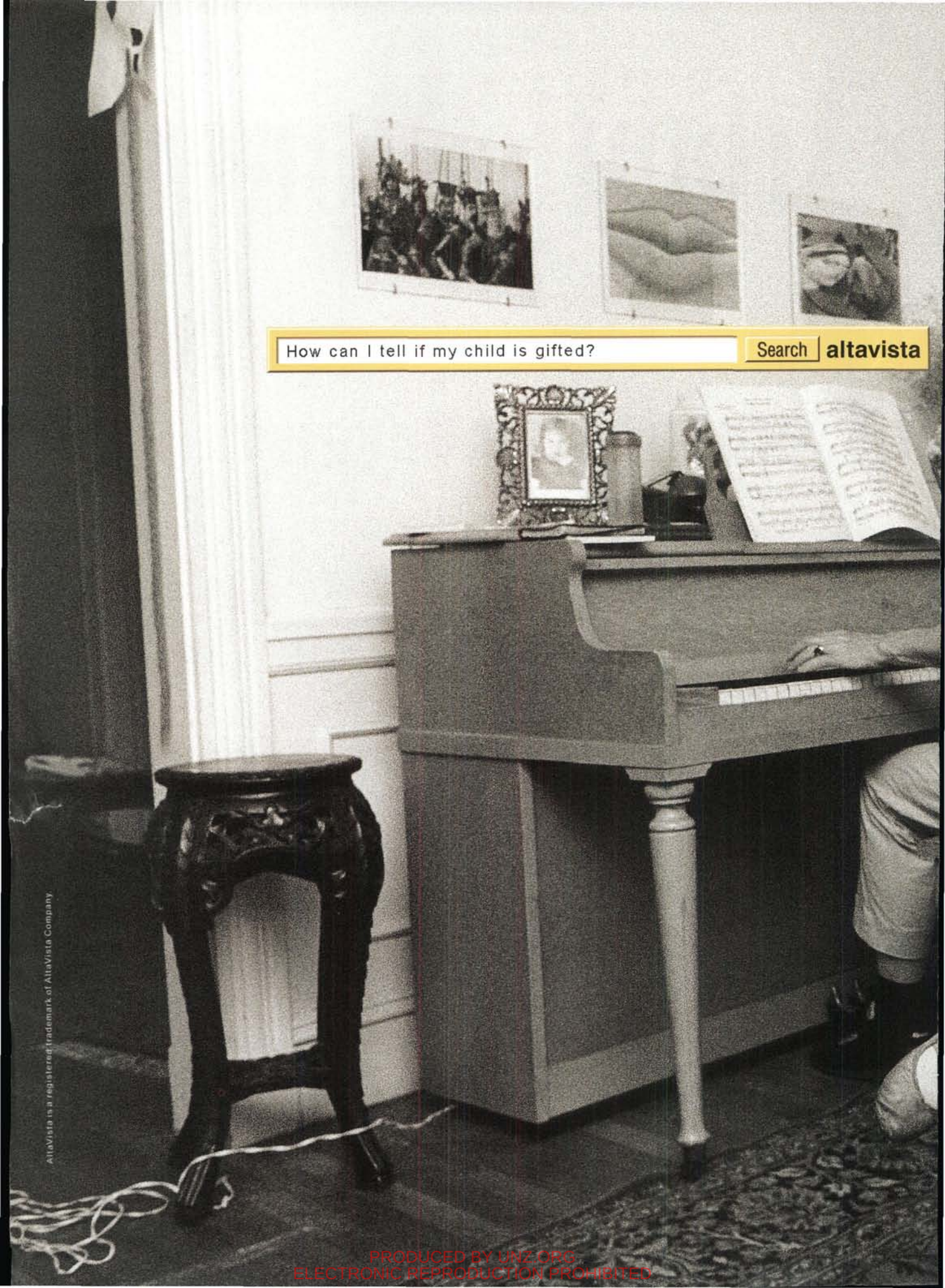
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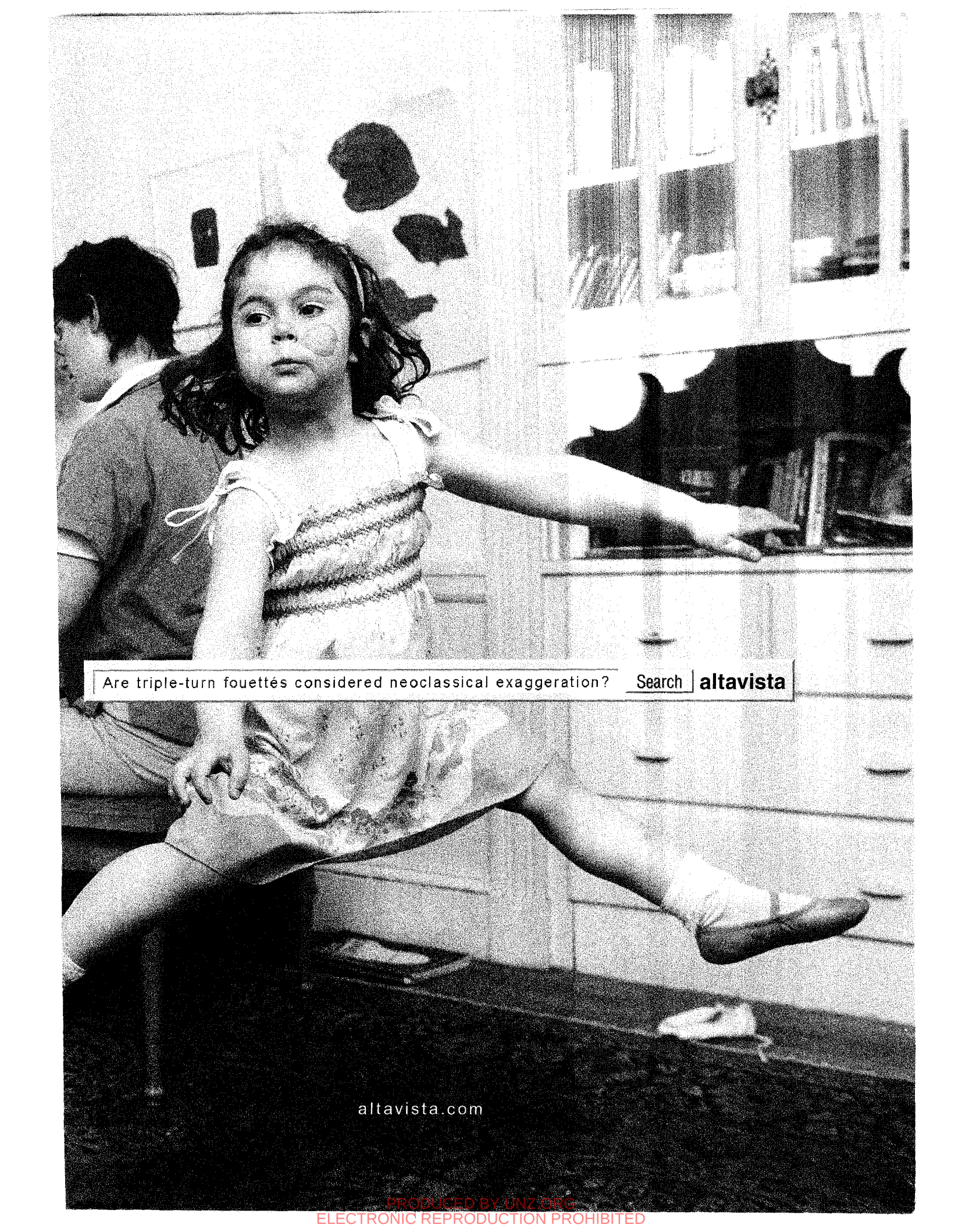


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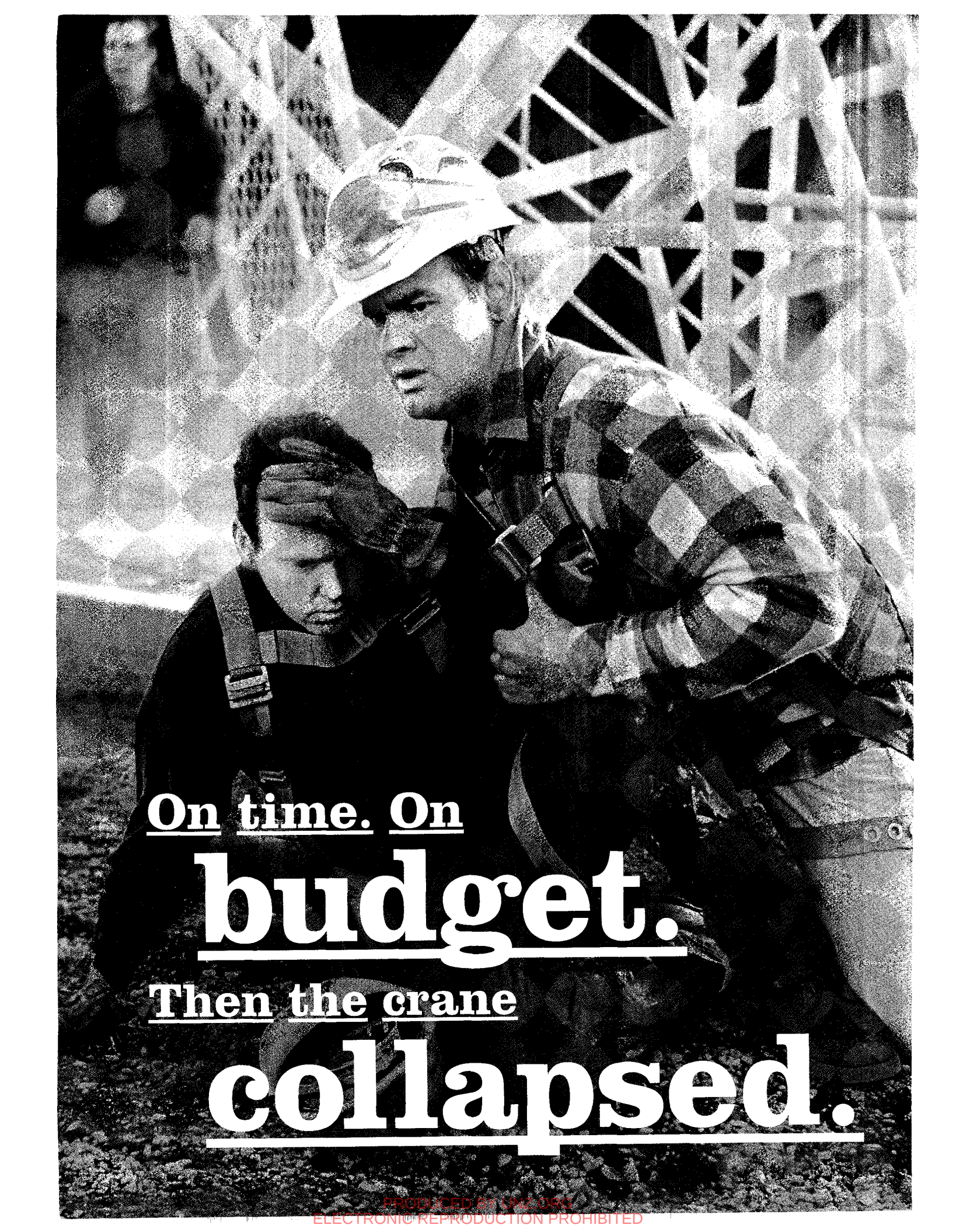
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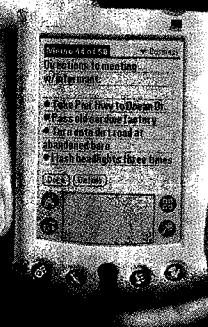


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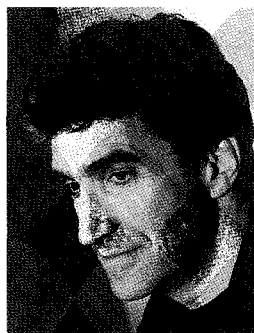
IN an online interview with *The Atlantic* in 1995, Robert Pinsky, whose essay "Poetry and American Memory" appears in this issue, had the following to say of his origins and his poetry: "I am from a lower-middle-class family in a small town in New Jersey. My grandpa had a bar there. My family was nominally Orthodox Jewish. In my work I try to pull together as many of the different kinds and levels of American speech and experience as I can." Pinsky, who is currently serving a third term as poet laureate of the United States, has returned often in his writing to his home town of Long Branch, where he was born in 1940. When he speaks, one hears the unpretentious accent of a kid from the Jersey shore who grew up loving movies and the tenor saxophone (on which he learned to play jazz) as much as literature.

Pinsky has held on to this sense of where he comes from even as he has been recognized as one of the most distinguished poets of his generation. His numerous honors include the Academy of American Poets' prestigious Landon Prize, for his translation of *The Inferno of Dante* (1994); the Lenore Marshall Prize, for his collected poems, *The Figured Wheel* (1996), also nominated for a Pulitzer Prize; and election

to the post of poet laureate in 1997 and to the American Academy of Arts and Letters earlier this year. His essay collection *Poetry and the World* (1988) was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Robert Lowell, writing in 1975, foresaw Pinsky's dual-faceted eminence: "Robert Pinsky belongs to that rarest category of talent, a poet-critic."

As laureate, Pinsky vigorously and creatively promotes poetry as a living, breathing, democratic art. His book *The Sounds of Poetry* (reviewed last March in these pages) is a guide to hearing and enjoying the vocal elements that make poems beautiful and memorable. The Favorite Poem Project, which Pinsky launched in 1997, is establishing a multimedia archive of poems read aloud by a thousand ordinary Americans, to be delivered to the Library of Congress next spring and made accessible on the Internet (www.favoritepoem.org).

Indeed, the Internet is a favorite Pinsky medium. In November of 1995 he became the first poet to read his work aloud for *The Atlantic's* Web site, and this month visitors to our online Poetry Pages (www.theatlantic.com/poetry/) will be able to hear the classic American poems reprinted in his essay in Pinsky's own resonant baritone. —THE EDITORS



SIGRID ESTRADA

CONTRIBUTORS

Jack Beatty ("Worth the Trip"), **Corby Kummer**, and **Barbara Wallraff** are senior editors of *The Atlantic Monthly*. **Cullen Murphy** is the managing editor. **Benjamin Schwarz** is a correspondent. **Ian Frazier**, **Francine Prose**, **Francine Russo**, and **Christina Schwarz** are regular contributors.

Peter Beinart ("The Rise of Jewish Schools") is a senior editor of *The New Republic*.

James Carroll ("The Holocaust and the Catholic Church") is the author of nine books, including the National Book Award-winning memoir *An American Requiem* (1996). He is at work on a book about the history of the conflict between Catholics and Jews.

Matthew Doherty ("On the Big Road") is an M.F.A. student in the creative-writing program at the University of Alabama. His article in this issue won first prize in *The*

Atlantic's 1998 student essay-writing competition.

Peter F. Drucker ("Beyond the Information Revolution") is a professor of social science at Claremont Graduate School and the author of more than thirty books. His most recent is *Management Challenges for the 21st Century* (1999).

William Gay ("Closure and Roadkill on the Life's Highway") is a writer whose work has appeared in *The Georgia Review*, *The Oxford American*, and *The Missouri Review*. His first novel, *The Long Home*, will be published next month.

Peter Harris ("The Net") is a professor of English at Colby College. His work has appeared in *The Beloit Poetry Journal* and *The Literary Review*.

William Hogeland ("Old-New Bluegrass") has written about music for *New York Press* and *Salon*.

Robert D. Kaplan ("Four-Star Generalists") is a correspondent for *The Atlantic*.

Andreas Karavis ("Morning") lives on the Aegean island of Lipsi. **David Solway** is the author of several books of poems, including *Chess Pieces* (1999).

Bill McKibben ("Listening to Lydon") is the author of several books, including *The Age of Missing Information* (1992), *Maybe One: A Personal and Environmental Argument for Smaller Families* (1999), and *The End of Nature* (1989), which has recently been re-issued in a tenth-anniversary edition.

Cullen Murphy ("Lulu, Queen of the Camels") is the author of *The Word According to Eve: Women and the Bible in Ancient Times and Our Own* (1998).

Robert Pinsky ("Poetry and American Memory") is poet laureate of the United States.

Valerie Sinclair (cover art) is a digital artist who lives in Toronto. Her work has appeared in *Fortune*, *Harper's*, and *Chicago* magazine, and she has done illustrations for Dow Jones and BellSouth.

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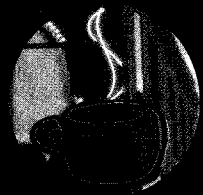
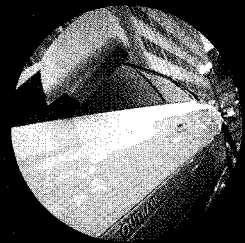
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LETTERS

What Dogs Want

Stephen Budiansky's interesting article "The Truth About Dogs" (July *Atlantic*) draws conclusions not documented by the studies cited, asserting that dogs are instinctual and that their behavior is determined by their genes, so that their apparent "emotions" are but shams, more pretense than real. Science can prove that something exists, but has difficulty proving that something does not exist. What study can Budiansky cite to prove that dogs have no emotions or affection—that they only pretend? What study can he cite to prove that emotions are not instinctual? Maternal love for an infant may be instinctual, but it is no less love. How does Budiansky define love or affection, scientifically or experimentally?

J. S. Wayland

Klamath Falls, Oreg.

I can just hear the legions of dog lovers revving up to fire their broadsides at Stephen Budiansky for his exposé of doggy duplicity.

To someone who expressed the Cartesian view that dogs cannot think, Charles Darwin, a great lover of dogs, is said to have replied, "Well, they can *dream* . . ." Budiansky's assailants, whose letters will pour into your office, will doubtless claim that he believes dogs do more than think: they plot. That goes a lot further than Gary Larson's brilliant depiction of what we say and what dogs hear (the cats are even funnier), but in a supra-individual, evolutionary sense, dogs have a "strategy," and it is almost entirely parasitic.

I say almost because some dogs (not my mother's, the worthless, thieving scoundrel) still have their original job as protector and early-warning device—no small service for urban pioneers. All the other things we've bred into them—chasing sheep in circles, pointing, and so forth—have been bred up from things mutts do naturally, in smaller doses. Dogs do them as if they were responding to a kind of post-hypnotic suggestion, and unreliably.

It was one of Darwin's most effective rhetorical points in support of the fact of evolution that even we puny human beings can make species evolve in directions we've chosen for them.

Scott L. Rolston

Bangkok, Thailand

If we follow Stephen Budiansky's argument, our dogs are not even pretending to like us; they are cleverly designed food- and care-extorting machines that have no feelings or personality at all. If we were scientific and realistic enough, we would recognize that to have personal feelings about our pets makes no more sense than to cultivate friendship with our refrigerators.

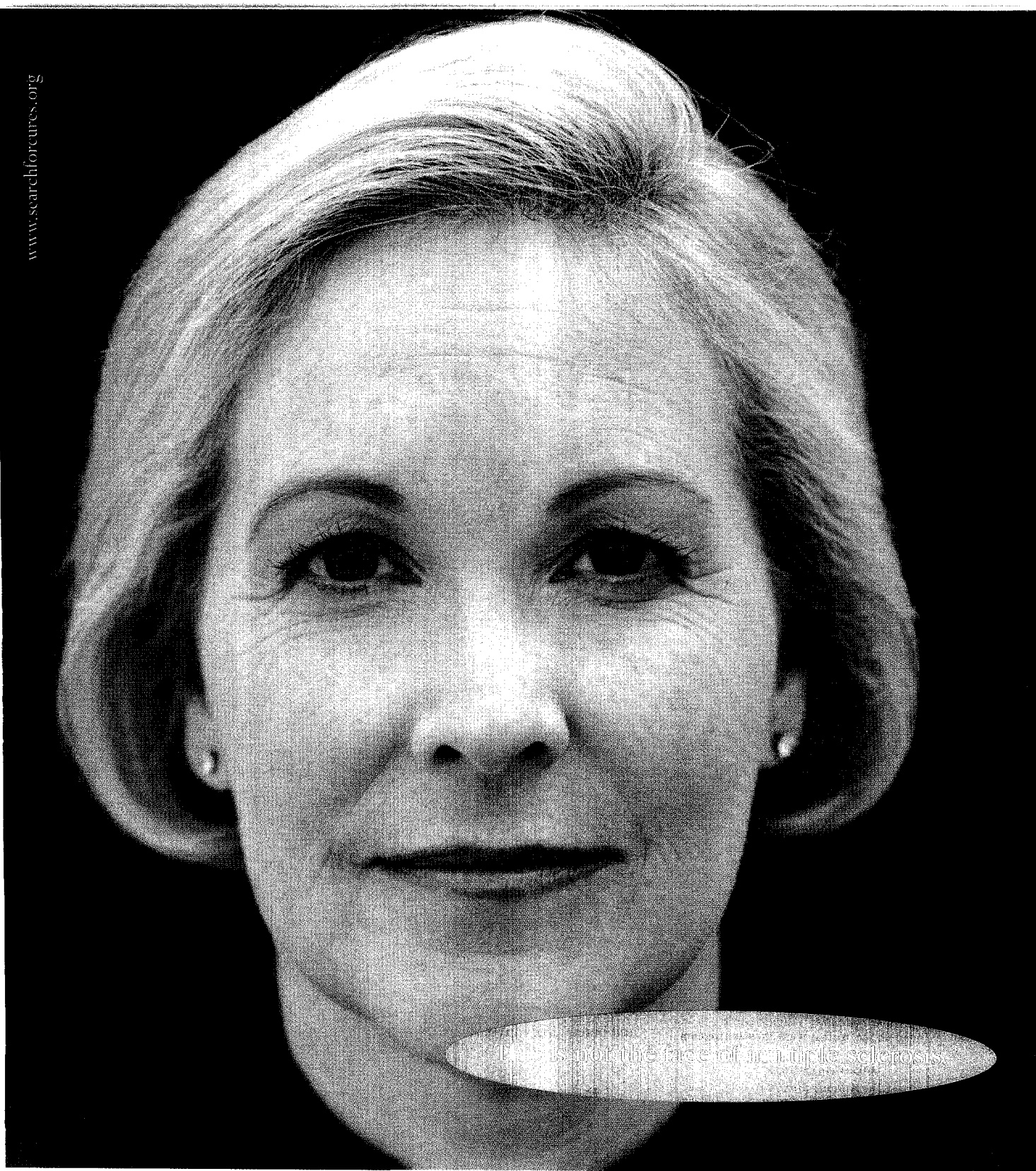
The evidence offered in support of this view consists of little more than some sketchy comparisons between the natural behavior of wolves and the domestic behavior of dogs, and a few cynical one-liners from animal behaviorists. Nowhere does the lengthy discussion of canine genetics actually enlighten us about how dogs might feel toward people. Neither genetics nor any other branch of science compels us to accept Budiansky's mechanistic views of animal behavior; only scientism does. The materialist, reductionist program Budiansky is selling us intends to reduce all personally and socially meaningful interactions to a simplistic model of evolutionary adaptation.

Robert Erard

Franklin, Mich.

School Vouchers

Matthew Miller's ostensible refutation of the primary argument against vouchers ("A Bold Experiment to Fix City Schools," July *Atlantic*)—that they drain resources from public schools—is a spurious one. Miller states that when money follows children who leave a public school, the remaining children are not shortchanged, because "schools receive the resources their enrollment merits." This ignores the fact that the amount that



It's the face of Connie Pierce. She's married to her high school sweetheart, has twin daughters and a job she loves. She has also been fighting multiple sclerosis (MS) for a decade. She credits family support, a sense of humor and advances in medicines from America's pharmaceutical companies with helping to dramatically slow the progression of her MS. Pharmaceutical company researchers continue to make breakthroughs and won't stop until there's a cure. So people like Connie can live and love and laugh for years to come.

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schools receive per pupil is based on an *average*—about \$5,000 per pupil in California. When a pupil leaves, a district gets \$5,000 less; if thirty leave, it loses \$150,000. This will fail to harm the remaining students only if the marginal cost of educating those lost students is equal to or greater than the average cost of educating them. This is certainly not the case. (Indeed, why should it be?) A district that loses thirty students can hire one less teacher and purchase fewer supplies, but fixed costs—for administration, maintenance, and other facilities—remain unchanged. If the marginal cost of educating those thirty lost students is as high as \$125,000, the pupils left behind lose \$25,000—enough to equip a complete computer lab.

Miller's additional argument that public schools can easily get rid of "troublesome" students is also facile. As a public school teacher, I know how facile it is. After all, even troublemakers have a right to a public education, at least in California, and have due-process rights that must be respected before they can be removed from the standard classroom.

Gordon Danning

Berkeley, Calif.

Matthew Miller replies:

I don't accept Gordon Danning's sense of what expenses are truly "fixed." Some of the costs he mentions would be cut if enrollment dropped significantly. Administrators and certain facilities would be harder to cut, yes, but if enrollment dropped enough, a school would have to cut them. The same would be true in a district that was losing population generally, whether or not vouchers were an issue. Otherwise kids would be shortchanged and bureaucracy favored.

Range Management

Re "Winning the War for the West," by Perri Knize (July *Atlantic*):

1) Knize fails to mention why conservationists have had to resort to lawsuits to achieve some measure of sanity in range management. The typical ranchers have long fought efforts by concerned Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management officials to adjust livestock numbers to range carrying capacity. In this they have had the staunch support of their friends in Congress. Lawsuits are finally doing what

should have been done by the ranchers themselves long ago.

2) Knize is really confused about the costs of grazing public lands. The controversy about costs has been about grazing fees, not the cost of acquiring a ranch, and about the fact that what federal agencies charge for grazing is only a fraction of what a rancher pays for grazing private range. Ranchers have fought hard, and successfully, to keep the fees low. Knize's statement that ranchers are willing to pay higher fees but are prevented from doing so by their banks is nonsense.

3) Ranchers and their sympathizers are fond of saying that "the federal range is in better condition than it has been in more than a century." Some ranges are. Others were so badly denuded of perennial grasses and lost so much soil to erosion that they have never recovered from the devastation of the early years.

4) Knize mentions the impact of grazing on riparian areas and the alleged benefits of livestock grazing to wildlife. According to her, in the absence of livestock grazing, wildlife populations would suffer. She does not explain the abundance of wildlife in national parks where livestock grazing isn't allowed. The widespread damage to riparian areas, according to Knize, is due to elk, not livestock. How does she explain the abused riparian areas on ranges where no elk can be found? In any area grazed by both elk and cattle the abundance of cow patties and the presence of livestock clearly show which ungulate is doing the damage.

Steve Callizioli

Retired Chief

*Wildlife Management Division
Arizona Game and Fish Department
Forest Lakes, Ariz.*

I was appalled by "Winning the War for the West." Perry Knize states that the public-lands rancher's "permit fees are not a form of subsidy—he has already paid full market value for the right to graze public lands."

The typical public-lands rancher may have paid the previous owner of his ranch the approximate value of his grazing permits as part of the ranch's purchase price, but that money didn't go to the federal government, which manages the public lands. Even by the government's own figures, cited by Knize, management costs are at least \$75 million annually, whereas ranchers contribute only \$20 million. If

that isn't a subsidy, please explain what is. And the subsidy is probably much greater than Knize (or the government) admits. Robert Nelson, an eighteen-year veteran of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Policy Analysis, and currently a professor of environmental policy at the University of Maryland School of Public Affairs, writing in the *Fordham Environmental Law Journal* (1997), calculated annual grazing-management costs just on BLM lands at \$200 million!

Knize's claim that ranchers have "the right to graze public lands" is pure nonsense. As recently as February 23 of this year the Tenth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals, ruling in *Diamond Bar Cattle Co. v. U.S.*, cited a long history of court decisions affirming that the grazing of livestock on public lands is not a right but a privilege that can be revoked by the government at any time.

Knize attempts to discredit environmentalists seeking to protect public lands from livestock. Such people would "have us believe that cattle grazing is an ecological evil on a par with clear-cut logging and open-pit mining. There is no justification for this claim." Really? No justification? Consider the article "Quantifying Threats to Imperiled Species in the United States," in the August, 1998, issue of *Bio-science*. Of 1,207 plant and animal species listed as endangered, threatened, or proposed for listing, mining affects 11 percent, logging affects 12 percent, and livestock grazing affects 22 percent. Knize says that as an "ecological evil," livestock grazing isn't on a par with logging and mining. She's right: it's much worse.

In support of her contention that whatever environmental damage has been done by livestock occurred in the distant past, before the development of modern livestock-management practices, Knize cites a BLM report of 1990 stating "that the public range was in the best condition yet this century, and improving." Yet Knize fails to mention a General Accounting Office report published the following year which countered, "We could not confirm BLM's conclusion that the public range-land is in better condition than ever before in this century because the historic studies BLM relied upon were prepared using different methodologies in some cases and in other instances did not contain supporting documentation."

Michael J. Hudak
Binghamton, N.Y.

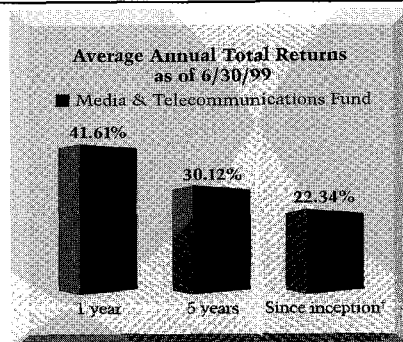
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Perri Knize replies:

Both Steve Gallizioli and Michael Hudak have missed the central point about the subsidy issue: ranchers, on balance, are paying fair market value for their grazing permits and are subsidized far less than the average American citizen. Many of us pay less in taxes for the public services we receive than the cost of providing them, and the grazing-program budget, which varies depending on which agency activities you include, is a very tiny percentage of the overall land-management budget. Many of the benefits we enjoy on public lands—such as recreation trails and fire control—are subsidized, according to the definition of these writers.

As for the condition of the public range, they have simply reiterated what I wrote in the article—that some lands may never recover from past abuses. The point is that we should be able to bring the land back to health and have responsible livestock-grazing at the same time. Many articles in *Bio-science* and other scientific journals claim that grazing is harmful—and just as many claim otherwise or extol its benefits. The point I was making is that we have no definitive baseline data that allow us to draw an objective conclusion on the matter. Either point of view may be correct or incorrect. The findings of the GAO report Mr. Hudak cites are in my article. I don't believe I asserted anywhere in the text that public-lands grazing is a right and not a privilege.

To imply that ranchers have changed their grazing practices only because they were forced to is to ignore the fact that ranchers defeated a proposal by Bruce Babbitt for range reforms and all attempts to raise grazing fees. The changes they have made were not forced on them. Ranchers have improved and continue to improve their grazing practices because to do so is better for the health of the land and therefore better for the health of their animals and their business.

National parks do not in fact substantiate Mr. Gallizioli's defense of elk. The tremendous damage that elk do to riparian areas and other vegetation is a major reason for park scientists' desire to return wolves to Yellowstone—to re-establish natural predators to control the elk population explosion. My story about the elk at Muddy Creek was cited as one example of how there is often more than meets the untutored eye when it comes to range management. It was in no way meant to imply that elk rather than cattle are the cause of

riparian damage. In fact, the article plainly states throughout that cattle have done and continue to do damage.

Killing Whales

William Aron, William Burke, and Milton Freeman ("Flouting the Convention," May *Atlantic*) assert that the creation of an on-board observer program is a safeguard that will assure sufficient regulation for the return of commercial whaling. They downplay the devastating cheating of the Soviet whaling fleet, which killed the most-endangered species of whales indiscriminately in vast numbers for more than twenty years, reporting only about one tenth of their kills, with the assertion that "the cheating took place before any observer program existed."

Wrong. The biologist Vassili Papastavrou reported on the scandal in the April 23, 1994, issue of *Science*: "The deception continued even in the presence of IWC observers. Although the observer scheme was international, observers were simply swapped between the Soviets and the Japanese." In 1994 a Norwegian whaler violated his quota—taking one for the road—with an observer on board.

The authors declare that "observer programs have proved effective in regulating the take of dolphins in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean." Wrong again. The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission is among those "observer programs"; its laxity is legend, and its record of enforcement is invisible. The efforts of activists, consumer outrage, and the 1990 U.S. ban on the import of tuna caught in purse-seine nets at the dolphins' expense are what saved the dolphins of the eastern tropical Pacific from certain extinction.

The authors deny claims of "a supposed illicit trade in whale products, implying that a large global market for such products exists. This has not been the case for decades."

In fact, no one has ever implied "a global market." The market is Japan and the nations of Southeast Asia. With whale in the Tokyo markets reaching \$300 for a kilo of meat and blubber, no further implications are necessary. The number of busts of whale-smuggling operations has been rising for the past ten years, and the introduction in 1995 of DNA-sampling techniques that have positively identified the meat of endangered fin whales, sperm

whales, and humpback whales sold under the cover of Japan's "research" minke-whale kill likewise speaks for itself.

The authors aver that the ideal of "quick and . . . nearly painless" death has been "largely achieved" in the whaling industry, "just as it is in the food industries that kill millions of cattle, sheep, pigs, and chickens every day." The comparison of cows in a slaughterhouse (necessitating a comparison of wild with domestic animals, which are bred in a controlled stock of known numbers) to a wildlife hunt that targets the largest members of the species—that is, pregnant females—should require no comment. The speed and painlessness of its death would come as news to a whale that is shocked into semi-consciousness at the end of a pair of low-voltage electric lances for upwards of thirty minutes and then drowned while being dragged upside down to a factory-processing ship.

The authors cite ancient tradition and traditional diet and its importance in "the social structure and moral norms of a community." In Japan whale meat as popular dietary tradition had its last flowering from 1946 to 1960, when Douglas MacArthur ordered an intensive whaling program to alleviate the postwar food shortage. Today Japan's aging political elite, struggling to keep an irrelevant industry alive, has been trying every marketing ploy it can think of to maintain some kind of popular taste for the postwar staple (home delivery, personal snack packs, school lunch programs), but the younger generation is generally repulsed by the thought of killing whales. Thus whale meat remains an expense-account menu item for the highest-ranking members of the *keiretsu*.

Paul Watson
President

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society
Venice, Calif.

Reading the rational defense of commercial whaling by Aron, Burke, and Freeman, I was reminded of a (true) story about the humorist Robert Benchley. While an undergraduate at Harvard, Benchley took a course in international relations. An exam for the course asked him to "take one side in the Irish fishing dispute [between Britain and Ireland] and defend it." Benchley, whose study habits were poorer than his wit, took the side of the fish. He failed the course.

Little can be said about the logical argu-

ments in favor of some permitted commercial whaling under existing international law except, of course, on the side of the whales. International law is not the highest law.

Geoffrey Sea
New York, N.Y.

William Aron, William Burke, and Milton Freeman reply:

The article to which Paul Watson refers was published not in *Science*, a world-respected peer-reviewed professional publication, but in *New Scientist*, a popular magazine. Its author was identified as a zoologist, but his role in a major animal-rights organization was not mentioned. The article provided a lurid account of plotting by the Russians and disparaged the IWC Scientific Committee for meeting "in camera" as representatives of the governments appointing them rather than as disinterested scientists. The author failed to note that the cheating was reported by a senior adviser to the President of Russia at an international scientific meeting in Galveston, Texas, the year before his article appeared. He didn't reveal that he had attended Scientific Committee meetings (representing a nongovernmental organization) and that most members, like those of the IWC itself, are from anti-whaling nations, including the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Scientists from these and other anti-whaling nations played key roles in developing the Revised Management Procedure that, if implemented, would permit controlled sustainable whaling that would allow whale populations to continue to grow.

The IWC observer program is credited by the IWC Secretary with leading to a dramatic improvement in official records of whale catches. Although Russia apparently cheated after observers were required, the extent of the cheating is still being investigated. That it was serious before 1972, when the observer scheme was introduced, is undisputed.

That observer programs can work when the political will exists is proved by the fact that the United States has placed its citizens on every foreign fishing vessel operating within the U.S. zone in the North Pacific since the 1970s. Japanese, Koreans, Poles, and Russians who want to fish in our zone have had to accept observers and pay the costs. This is true for the U.S. vessels that have replaced the foreign fleets. Mr. Watson's depiction of the

role of observers in the eastern tropical Pacific has little relation to fact. The dolphin-mortality-limit program administered by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, in which observers play a key role, has been extremely successful, owing in major part to the work of the commission and its professional staff. Because of the effectiveness of national and international observer programs, we believe that an international IWC observer program can work and avoid the problems of the past.

Mr. Watson's arguments about whales as a source of food and economic wealth are confusing, contradictory, and distorted. Whale meat as a "popular dietary tradition" probably peaked in Japan in the postwar period, a time of real shortages of food, especially of meat. As alternatives became available and IWC quotas more restrictive, whales became less important to the Japanese diet. Even so, whale meat remained one of the least-expensive sources of animal protein available to the Japanese until the whaling moratorium. Mr. Watson's assertion that whale meat may cost as much as \$300 per kilo must be treated with caution. Such a price could apply only to a very special cut of whale meat (called *onimi*), found near the tail fin and representing a minute proportion of the whale's mass.

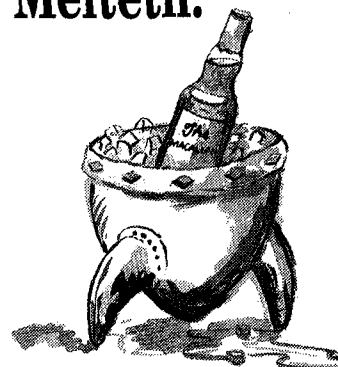
As for Mr. Watson's claim that whale smuggling has been rising for the past ten years, this is wishful thinking. Independent checks of whale meat in Japanese markets, stores, and restaurants by TRAFIC (the wildlife-monitoring unit of the IUCN-The World Conservation Union) in the past have indicated that all meat from whales either legally taken by the Japanese or legally imported before an import ban was enforced by Japan can be accounted for.

CORRECTIONS

Owing to a computer error in the September issue of *The Atlantic*, in "Lincoln's Greatest Speech?," by Garry Wills, several words or phrases that should have had double underlines had single underlines only. We deeply regret the error.

The Contributors note in the September *Atlantic* for James K. Glassman and Kevin A. Hassett should have given Times Books, a division of Random House, as the publisher of their new book, *Dow 36,000: The New Strategy for Profiting From the Coming Rise in the Stock Market*.

The Iceman Melteth.



A CHEQUE DRAWN ON THE BANK OF ICELAND

accompanied by a request for six bottles of The Macallan Malt Whisky, started a *lively debate* at the Distillery the other day.

Was it wise for these stern countrymen of ice and fire to seek out the mellow blandishments of The Macallan?

That billowing sherry-oak redolence, with its hints of the *comfortable South*, should be treated with caution by the hardy sons of ERIK THE RED, argued our Moral Tutor. "A few sips could undo centuries of stoicism." But our Sales Director prevailed, and The Macallan was despatched the same evening. However, if you are planning a trip to Iceland, it might now be wise to include a paper hat and some streamers.

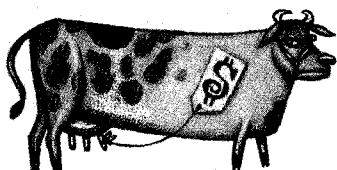
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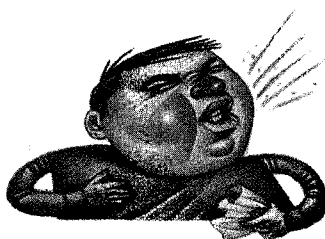
Health & Safety

The first clinical trials in 20 years of a vaccine against group A *Streptococcus*—the bacterium that causes strep throat—are now under way, at the University of Maryland's Center for Vaccine Development. Tests of a group A strep vaccine ground to a halt in the 1970s, after some experimentally vaccinated children developed rheumatic fever, which often leads to heart disease. However, scientists continued investigating because of accumulating links between group A strep and pneumonia, toxic shock syndrome, and "flesh-eating" disease. Genetic engineering has now enabled them to strip from the vaccine those components thought to react with heart tissue. The first phase of the trials will involve adults only; plans call for eventually including children.



Food

October 1: New milk-pricing rules are scheduled to go into effect today, as the country's 60-year-old milk-pricing system—long criticized by many producers and consumers as antiquated and unfair—is modified to meet requirements of the 1996 Farm Bill. Over the years the government has attempted to stabilize the milk supply by establishing minimum prices within specified geographic regions (a practice that came under fire from dairy farmers in states where milk is abundant and price floors were consequently lower) and by buying surplus butter, cheese, and nonfat dry milk (a practice that will be abolished by the end of the year). Under the new system the regions will be consolidated and the price differences between them will be reduced. The reforms are expected to lower the average retail price of milk by about two cents a gallon.



Q&A

Why do some people sneeze when they look at a bright light?

Doctors disagree on what causes this phenomenon, which appears to be hereditary and goes by three clinical names: "photosternutatory reflex," "autosomal dominant compelling helio-ophthalmic outburst" (ACHOO), and, most commonly, "photic sneeze reflex." According to one theory, light stimulates the nerves in the face, which in turn irritate the mucous membranes, resulting in a sneeze; a second theory holds that the optic nerve irritates the mucous membranes. Up to a third of the population is thought to be afflicted. Military researchers, worried about the implications for combat pilots, have sought remedies, but to no avail. After subjecting pilots wearing military, designer, and ordinary sunglasses and goggles to different wavelengths and intensities of light, the researchers were able to conclude only that "the best defense appears to be education and identification of those pilots with the sneezer trait."

Arts & Letters

This is an eventful month for pop-culture collectors, with major auctions of the possessions of Elvis Presley (to be held in Las Vegas by Guernsey's, October 8–10) and of Marilyn Monroe (to be held in New York City by Christie's, October 27–28). Nearly 2,000 of Presley's possessions are slated to be on the block, including movie scripts, credit cards, letters, and clothing ranging from Army fatigues to pajamas. The proceeds

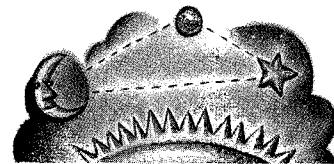


will be used to build a housing development in Memphis for the homeless. (As a teenager Elvis lived in a federal housing project.) The auction can be seen at www.earthcam.com; it will be the first to be broadcast in its entirety on the Internet. Highlights of the Monroe sale will include the actress's script for the comedy *Some Like It Hot*, a ring given her by Joe DiMaggio, and the flesh-colored dress in which she sang "Happy Birthday" to President John F. Kennedy. Some of the proceeds will go to various charities.



Environment

This month, as grazing season comes to a close in the Northwest, researchers will determine how many of the cattle in a 60,000-acre region in central Idaho were killed this year by wolves. They will do so by analyzing the information collected in response to signals from radio transmitters that were attached to the ears of 230 calves last May. The transmitters, dubbed "death sensors," alerted scientists whenever a calf died, allowing them to locate the animal and determine the cause of death. The study is a cooperative effort by several groups affected by wolf-cattle interaction, including ranchers, conservationists, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It represents the first time that radio transmitters have been used this way to monitor wolf predation. Cattle deaths have been a growing problem in Idaho: last year nearly 16 percent of all the cattle under study in the region died. Ranchers charge that most of the cattle were killed by wolves reintroduced to Idaho by the federal Wolf Recovery Program. Defenders of Wildlife, a group dedicated to the conservation of endangered species, compensates ranchers found to have lost cattle to the wolves.

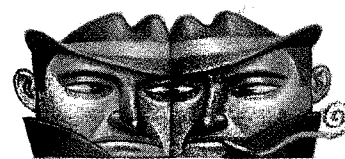


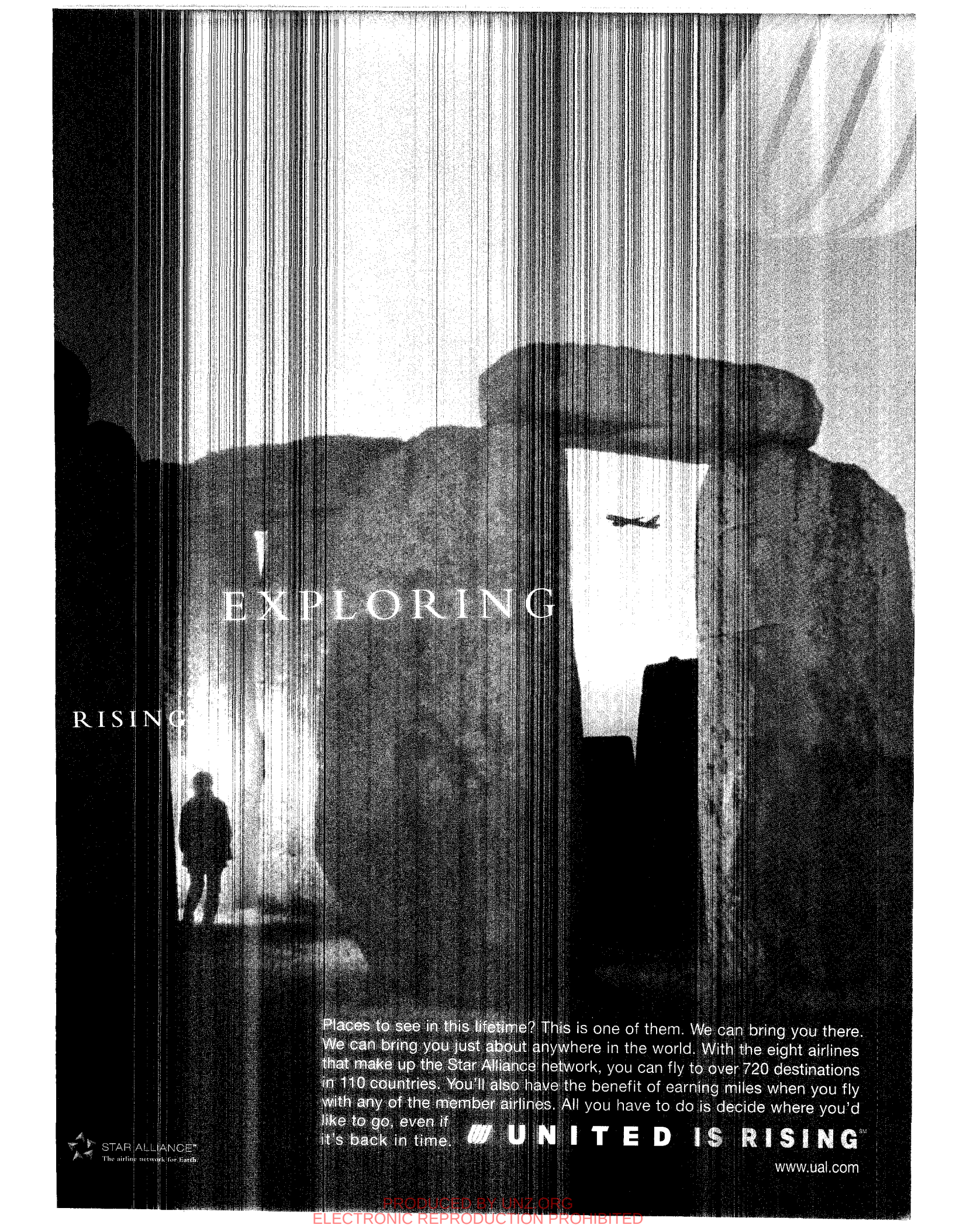
The Skies

October 5: Venus, the waning crescent Moon, and the bright star Regulus make a tight triangle in the east just before dawn. Venus has just passed its maximum brilliance for the year. 23: Jupiter is at opposition—it rises as the sun sets and stays in the sky all night long. It is also at its brightest since 1987. 24: Full Moon, also known this month as the Hunter's Moon and the Moon of the Freezing Water. 31: At 2:00 A.M., Daylight Saving Time gives way to Standard Time. Turn clocks back one hour.

25 Years Ago

Edwin Newman, writing in the October, 1974, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "[The expression] eyeball-to-eyeball, though it came close to burlesque even at the beginning (for example, when hard-nosed private eyes are private-eyeball-to-private-eyeball, does an eye or nose prevail?), was once a fairly graphic phrase. Because of overuse, it has been devalued. American journalism has a way of seeing to that, of fastening on words and sucking them dry. Controversial is such a word, because it is applied to almost every issue that arises in politics, and because reporters feel obliged to tell us that issues that are resolved in the Senate by votes of fifty-one to forty-nine are controversial. Again, as anyone can discern from book jackets, scarcely a book appears that is not controversial, even when it is also witty, warm, and wise."





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Military history pierces the philosophical fog that often surrounds the other humanities

THE war in Kosovo elicited questions and realizations that went far beyond the air campaign and the Balkan politics associated with it. What constitutes a "just" war? Assuming we had the choice, for instance, wouldn't it be more defensible morally to assassinate the evil ruler of a country than to kill civilians at a distance of 15,000 feet? The ancients would have considered it just to capture the Yugoslav leader, Slobodan Milosevic, and parade him down the streets of Rome in a cage for the gawking populace. But to kill from such a distance would have been considered cowardly, and perhaps even unjust. Look at the moral distance Germany has traveled: upon arrival its ground troops began vigorously protecting people singled out for retribution purely because of their ethnicity. The economics, too, were fascinating. Who knows what kind of subtle economic pressure was put not only on Russia but also on the poorer and more troublesome members of the NATO coalition, Greece and Italy, to keep them from deserting the war effort? The work required to keep Greece and Italy in line by their richer counterparts in the European Union showed that "Europe," whatever its pretensions, is still a Northern European affair, in which the south is bribed and bullied to shut up. And if it's true that all politics is local, think what came

by Robert

clear about Russian internal politics through the prism of the war: sending 200 soldiers to take a deserted airport, where they had to beg for supplies from NATO soldiers, apparently sufficed to shore up Russian pride and to get Communists and neo-fascists off Boris Yeltsin's back. Finally, consider the technological complications of a world more interconnected than it was in previous centuries: shutting off Serbia's electricity completely would have affected our ally Macedonia, which uses the same electricity grids.

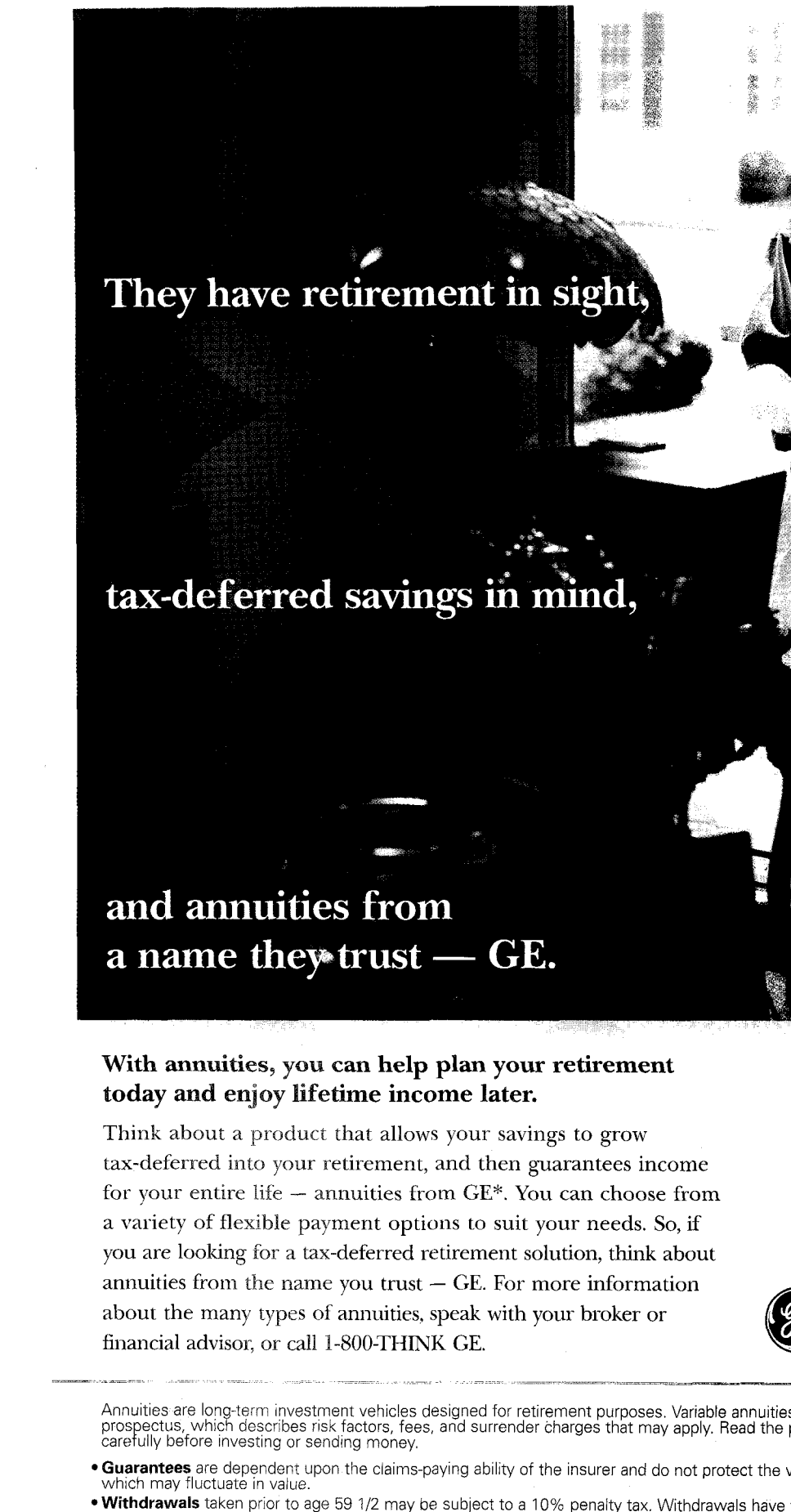
Military campaigns, because they are fights for the sheer survival of nations and cultures, offer the most telling insights about the values, technologies, social relations, and intellectual life

of historical periods. And because both death and defeat are undeniable, a military historian is forced to pierce the accumulated fog of philosophical abstractions and political agendas that frustrates other historical disciplines. Though rarely regarded as such, military history is as august a field as any in the liberal arts.

The irrelevance of abstractions and the bleak view of human nature fostered by war give classical history its pellucid edge, and perhaps account for a recent resurgence of interest in ancient Greek and Roman authors. In fact, classical literature is overwhelmingly military history. The conduct and af-

by Robert D. Kaplan

Illustration by David McLimans



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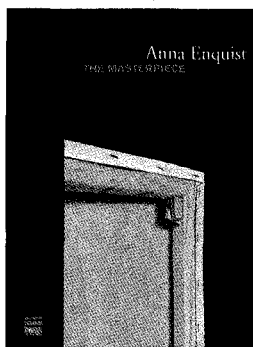
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termath of the Trojan War form the plot of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The book that gave "history" its name—Herodotus' *The History*—is about the war between Greece and Persia in the fifth century B.C. and its origins. *The Peloponnesian War* contains Thucydides' surgical insights into human behavior—for example, after hearing Pericles' funeral oration celebrating virtue, the Athenians' every-man-for-himself reaction to a disease outbreak exposed their lack of virtue. Livy's *The War With Hannibal* is the first-century Roman historian's most memorable work. (Is there a better introduction to the Mediterranean world of the third century B.C. than Livy's description of Hannibal's army as being composed of mercenaries who often did not understand one another's languages?) There is probably no more penetrating portrait of the difficulty that Jews have had in governing themselves than *The Jewish War*, by the first-century historian Flavius Josephus, who described a Saturnalian pageant of interfactional bloodletting—one that any Beirut militia-man today would find familiar—prior to the Roman conquest of Jewish Jerusalem, in 70 A.D.

Nearer our own day there is Ulysses S. Grant's *Personal Memoirs*, largely a recollection of Civil War battles, which Mark Twain, Edmund Wilson, and Gertrude Stein considered to be among the handful of books crucial to understanding American civilization. And those present-day books that have best bridged the gap between academia and best-sellerdom often concentrate on military history: the works of Shelby Foote, Stephen Ambrose, John Keegan, Paul Fussell Jr., and Paul Kennedy, for example. Serious television, both public and cable, has demonstrated a large appetite for documentaries about past wars. A recent scan of the Borders bookstore in Ann Arbor, near the University of Michigan, showed a section on military history as large as the one on Western philosophy, and larger than the sections on Asia, Africa, and the Middle East combined.

University military-history courses are today frequently oversubscribed. Of course, part of the reason is that relatively few such courses are offered. At a time when the social sciences have been increasingly politicized, military history has few supporters within the academy. Of the 180 sessions and events listed in the program of the most recent conven-

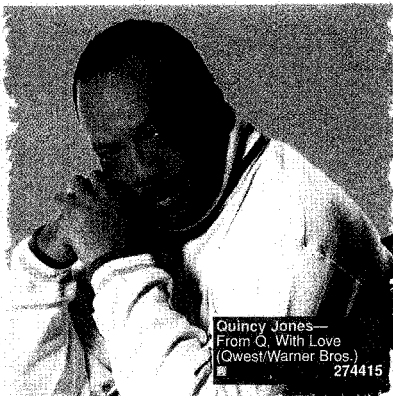
tion of the Organization of American Historians, only a few dealt with military history, whereas a third covered race, class, ethnicity, or gender. Dennis Shonewalter, a military-history professor at Colorado College and the president of the Society for Military History, told me not long ago, "War has been until recently a gendered activity, involving men, so it is a field in which new female academics have little interest. War is also about sacrifice and heroism, of the kind glorified from the Trojan War through the Second World War, which many academics do not hold in high esteem." Left-leaning academics see military historians as warmongers; conservatives, preoccupied with saving Western-civilization courses and unhappy with some military histories of Vietnam, have not truly come to the discipline's defense.

■ ■ ■

And yet military history will never diminish in relevance. It comes closest of all the liberal arts to being a hard science. And its reach is broad. No other branch of the humanities bestows its highest honors on generalists who have the ability to educate a wide audience. Take *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861–1865*, a recent book by a young assistant professor at Ohio State, Mark Grimsley, which military historians praise. Written with as much skill as the best general-interest books, it offers a scholarly account of how Lincoln brought the war to southern civilians by stages, yet never to the extent suffered by civilians in European wars. What stands out is the author's effort to weave world history and culture into a study of just one aspect of the Civil War. Although teaching positions in military history are scarce, Grimsley's and other books show that thinking and writing in the field have rarely been healthier. This is partly because military historians, to a much greater degree than others in the liberal arts, have real clients: the military and diplomatic communities, which demand clear, nonacademic prose.

At a time when the humanities are perceived as the domain of lackluster academicians, and as being increasingly abstruse and irrelevant, it is odd that college presidents and search committees do not try to bolster the one liberal art that embodies the scientific and analytical rigors demanded by a corporate, entrepreneurial age. ☛

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Miles Davis—Bitches
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Everette Harp—
Common Ground
(Blue Note) 488783

Ray Charles—Blues &
Jazz (Rhino) 478206

Billy Eckstine—
Everything I Have Is
Yours: The Best Of The
MGM Years
(Verve) 474189

Ella Fitzgerald—The
Best Of The Songbooks
(Verve) 468231

Art Blakey & The Jazz
Messengers—
Night In Tunisia
(Blue Note) 448811

Miles Davis—Someday
My Prince Will Come
(Columbia Jazz
Masterpieces) 427914

Dexter Gordon—Go
(Blue Note) 409250

Herbie Hancock—
Maiden Voyage
(Blue Note) 408724

Tom Scott &
The L.A. Express—
Smokin' Section
(Windham Hill) 277392

McCoy Tyner—
The Real McCoy
(Remastered)
(Blue Note) 273037

John Coltrane—Giant
Steps (Atlantic) 371591

Charlie Christian—The
Genius Of The Electric
Guitar (Columbia Jazz
Masterpieces) 362707

Miles Davis—Round
About Midnight (Columbia
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Charlie Haden—
The Montreal Tapes:
Liberation Music
Orchestra (Verve) 280529

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Rhythm—A Handful Of
Keys (Buddah
Records) 279380

Chuck Mangione—
The Feeling's Back
(Chesky Records) 278077

Cannonball Adderley—
Somethin' Else
(Remastered)
(Blue Note) 273029

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(Warner Bros.) 266213

Branford Marsalis
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(Columbia) 277350

Herbie Hancock—
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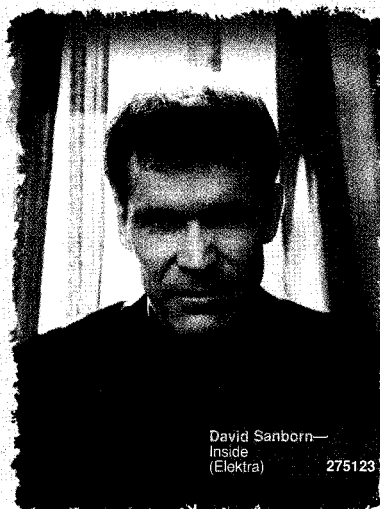
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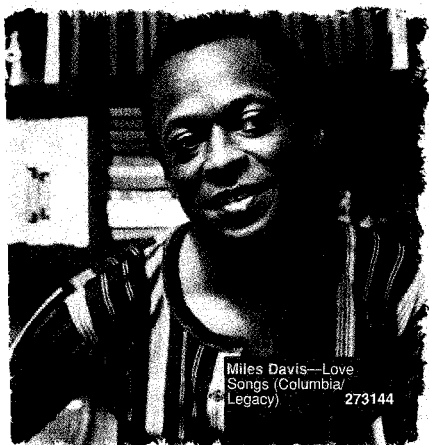
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The Rise of Jewish Schools

The phenomenon comes at a bad time for the public schools—and opens up a new debate over the meaning of “integration”

IT'S Wednesday, third period, at the New Jewish High School, in Waltham, Massachusetts, and Susan Tanchel's tenth- and eleventh-grade Bible class has taken an unexpected turn. A discussion of prophetic verses contrasting God's treatment of Saul with his treatment of David has erupted into an attack on the text itself. "God is a nutcase idea," exclaims a young woman with dyed-blond hair and headphones dangling around her neck. "Do you think I believe in this? This is a fairy tale."

by Peter Beinart

It's a subversive moment. Tanchel admonishes the young skeptic to respect the beliefs of her classmates, and suggests that she will find a kindred sensibility when the class reads the cynical Ecclesiastes, later in the year. But no one seems fazed by the outburst. After all, the New Jewish High School is a rather subversive institution itself. Founded in 1997, atop a suburban bank building, it is helping to erode a century-old consensus about the way American Jews educate their children.

That consensus, once affirmed by all but a small Orthodox minority, held that separate schools for Jews were a relic of the Old World, a happily discarded vestige of societies in which Jews lived apart. As Samson Benderly, later the director of the Board of Education of the New York Kehillah, an early Jewish communal organization, put it in 1908,

What we want in this country, is not Jews who can successfully keep up their Jewishness in a few large ghettos, but men and women who have grown up in freedom and can assert themselves wherever they are. A parochial system of education among the Jews would be fatal to such hopes.

In 1956, the year the American Council for Judaism restated its opposition to schools that "take children out of the general American environment and train them to lead segregated lives," Benderly's vision seemed secure. Fewer than five percent of Jewish children attended Jewish schools.

Preparing children for "the general American environment" meant public education as both practice and ideology. "The public school," says Alvin I. Schiff, the Irving I. Stone Distinguished Professor of Education at Yeshiva University, in New York, "was considered sacred, holy. It was the method and setting by which Jews could become Americans." Religious education, which had dominated the yeshivas of Eastern Europe, had to be reconciled with the new commitment, and so a peculiarly American institution was born: the supplementary school. First in the crowded apartments and storefronts of immigrant neighborhoods, later in the suburbs to which Jews moved after the Second World War, religious learning was consigned to Sundays and weekday afternoons. Even as the public schools fostered upward mobility, the supplementary schools would instill in Jewish children sufficient knowledge and group attachment to prevent integration from becoming assimilation.

That model, which served for most of this century, is today coming apart at the seams. Since the early 1960s the number of children attending supplementary schools has fallen by half, to about 270,000. And the number in full-time Jewish schools—the kind that many Jew-

ish leaders once scorned as self-segregating—has more than tripled, to about 200,000. Currently the population of Jewish school-age children numbers roughly a million. The proportion enrolled in public schools has declined from more than 90 percent in 1962 to about 65 percent today. The rise of institutions like the New Jewish High School represents something close to a renegotiation of the terms of American Jewish life. And for America's battered public school system it could not come at a worse time.

THE New Jewish High School—or “New Jew,” as the students call it—is an institution virtually without precedent. The standard images of Jewish school—ultra-Orthodox boys in white button-down shirts and velvet yarmulkes poring over the Talmud in a strictly all-male environment—do not apply. A few of the boys at New Jew wear yarmulkes, but others sport sunglasses, headphones, and the occasional goatee. Almost none of the girls wear the long sleeves that symbolize Orthodox modesty. The students look like public schoolers, and a generation ago most of them would have been. Indeed, Daniel Lehman, New Jew's bearish headmaster, notes that only a minority of his students' parents attended Jewish schools themselves.

Most of the parents at New Jew associate themselves with the Conservative movement, and many are less than strictly observant. Indeed, a 1995–1996 study of Conservative parents with children in Jewish schools found that fewer than half kept kosher in their homes, and fewer than a quarter kept kosher outside them. Jennifer Miller, the head of The Rashi School, a Boston-area Reform elementary and middle school founded in 1986, estimates that only 10 to 15 percent of parents with children at her school can read and comprehend Hebrew. Yet such parents, by choosing Jewish schools, are preparing their children to lead more observant, less assimilated lives than they do. Some even describe the phenomenon as an inversion of a practice in nineteenth-century Europe whereby parents would remain Jewish but baptize their children.

Why a growing number of relatively secular Jewish parents are abandoning the education model of their youth is a topic of considerable debate within the organized Jewish world. One clear answer is that the supplementary schools have large-

ly failed to produce graduates well versed in Judaism. In the century's early decades, before the suburban migration, when Jewish children were less likely to take piano lessons or join soccer teams, the supplementary schools could require as many as twelve hours a week of study. But over the decades the hours were whittled down, with noticeable results. Rabbi David Shapiro, the principal of Maimonides, Boston's largest Orthodox school, says that often teenagers who have attended supplementary school for seven or eight years cannot read Hebrew as well as his school's second-graders. In addition to knowledge, the supplementary schools were supposed to inculcate sufficient Jewish identity to prevent intermarriage. Yet in 1990 the highly publicized National Jewish Population Survey made it abundantly clear that they had not. According to the NJPS, more than half of all Jews married between 1985 and 1990 married gentiles, and subsequent research has shown that graduates of supplementary schools are more than twice as likely as graduates of full-time Jewish schools to marry outside their faith.

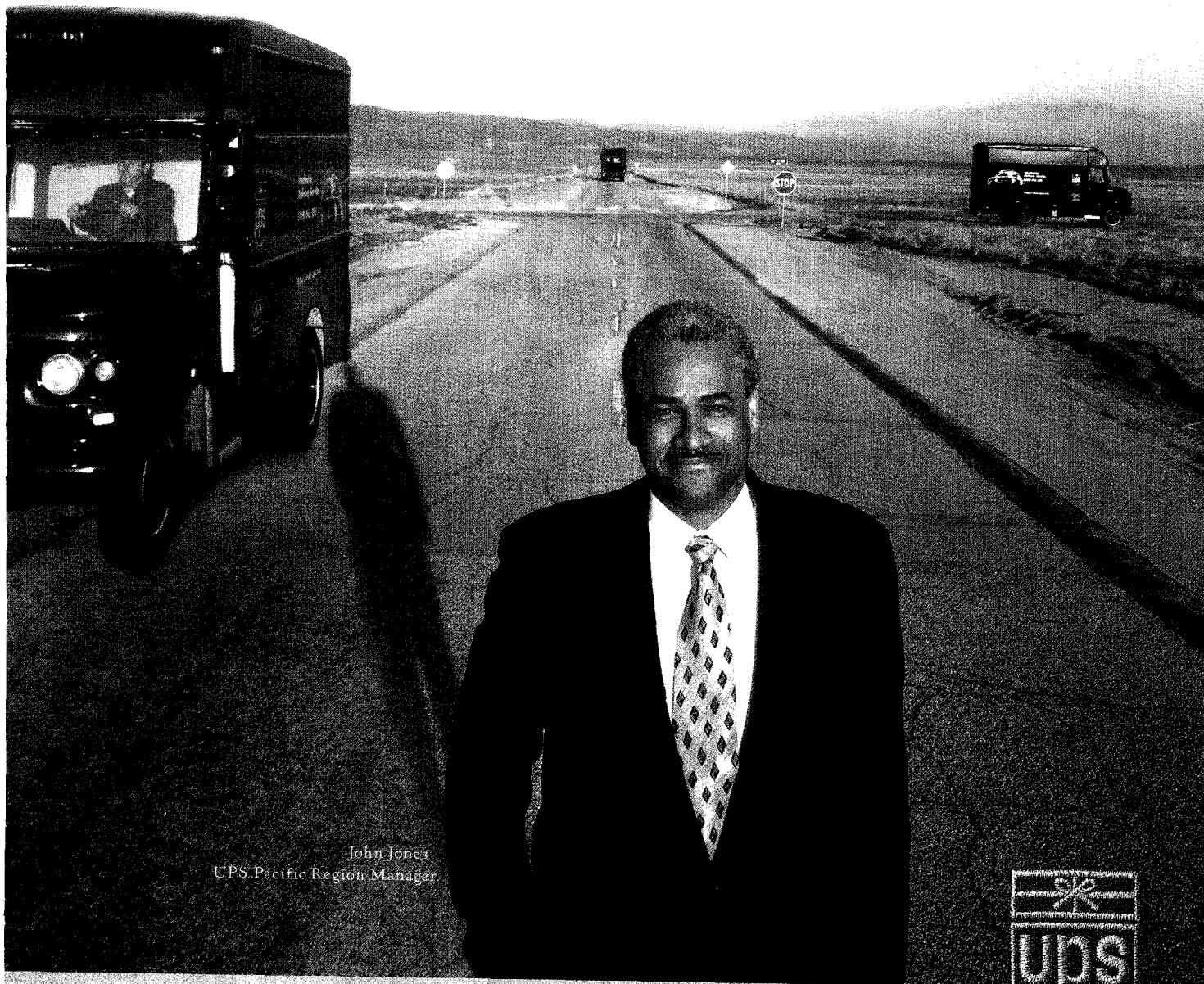
All the talk about Jewish identity may also obscure a less high-minded reason for the Jewish-school boom: as Jews have moved up the economic ladder, their commitment to public education has waned. Jennifer Miller acknowledges that although Rashi's Jewish curriculum is an attraction, many parents choose the school for the same reasons that parents choose other private schools. “As the public schools have eroded,” Miller says, “we are no longer being compared so much to public schools as to other independents.” Jewish leaders argue that because Jews make up such a small proportion of the U.S. population, the growth of Jewish schools has no real impact on the overall health of American public education. But public schools rely more heavily on Jewish support than the numbers would suggest, in part because Jewish organizations, fearful of any breakdown of the wall between Church and State, have traditionally lobbied hard against school vouchers and other government aid to private schools. As awareness grows that voucher programs might benefit financially strapped Jewish schools, that opposition may diminish. Today most non-Orthodox Jewish groups still reject school choice. But Rabbi Robert Abramson, the education director of the United Synagogue of

Conservative Judaism, says that the Conservative movement is revisiting the issue. Rabbi David Saperstein, of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, admits that in his movement as well there is “a growing minority” of voucher supporters. In New York, where Governor George Pataki last year signed a law that permits charter schools, some Jewish leaders are proposing the first ever government-funded school of Jewish culture.

THERE is another, even more sensitive issue lurking behind the Jewish-school phenomenon. Earlier generations of Jews, according to Eduardo Rauch, of the Jewish Theological Seminary, in New York, sent their children to public school not simply as a means of ascending into the middle class but as a show of national loyalty. Today, in contrast, parents are willing to consider Jewish schools in part because they no longer fear being viewed as outsiders. They take their integration into mainstream America as a given. But what if earlier generations were correct—that full equality in an overwhelmingly Christian country is, in fact, reliant on Jewish willingness to participate in a common system of education? In South Africa and Australia, where most Jews send their children to separate schools, discrimination is hardly pervasive, but the lack of a melting-pot ideology means that Jews remain more communally separate than they do in the United States. In fact, when discussing issues like Afrocentrism and bilingual education, American Jewish leaders sometimes bemoan the demise of the melting-pot ideal in this country. Yet separate religious schools both rely on that demise and exacerbate it. The Orthodox community, for its part, has rarely celebrated the melting pot, and generally worries less about total acceptance by the broader culture. But the mind-set is different at a place like New Jew, which aims to correct the troublesome aspects of Jewish integration—pervasive intermarriage and religious illiteracy—without accepting even the slightest diminution of the opportunities that full integration brings.

It is an ambitious venture—based on the inspiring, and perhaps slightly naive, premise that being a fuller Jew need never mean being a less complete American. And it will be tested in earnest starting next June, when the New Jewish High School sends its first graduating class out into the world. ☛

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On the Big Road

*The life and times
of a truck-driving poet*

THERE'S a drop lot off Ballard Street in Worcester, Massachusetts, where Proline Carriers used to keep some trailers, and that's where my trainer, Ed Cooney, and I grabbed an empty to run up to Wakefield, where we got a load of cardboard packaging bound for Kettering, Ohio. I had graduated from the College of the Holy Cross, in Worcester, in May of 1995. It was now October 10. In the intervening months I had gone to trucking school, gotten my commercial driver's license, and found a

by Matthew Doherty

job. I had already completed the two-week orientation in Nashville, Tennessee, and would have been put with a trainer there, but I had to fly home for my niece's christening. I met up with Ed Cooney at a truck stop in Mansfield; we drove trailerless to Worcester to get an empty, and thus the mighty coincidence of beginning my trucking career in the shadow of my alma mater.

It was a beautiful fall day, and Holy Cross shone atop Mount Saint James. I could see the brick academic buildings,

and the dorms where some of my friends lived. After ten days with Ed (who suffered from some kind of sleep apnea, and kept me awake every night in the truck) I would get a road test in Nashville and be assigned my own truck. My oft-ridiculed plan, conceived that spring, was falling into place.

Spring semester of senior year I didn't quite have my act together. I wanted to go to graduate school and get a master of fine arts in poetry, but around March I realized that I had missed the deadlines. I figured I could work at some kind of job for a year and then apply, but I wasn't going to move back home, to Scituate, and I didn't want to spend all my money on some ridiculous rent in Boston. Somehow I came up with the idea of driving a truck. Trucking school would cost about \$3,800, but that was less than rent somewhere for a year, and I knew that truckers made good money, and I had loans to pay down, and I liked to drive, and I'd have time to think.

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† The Standard & Poor's 500 Composite Stock Price Index is an unmanaged index of 500 common stocks and is a generally accepted measure of stock market performance. The S&P 500 had average annual total returns of +22.76%, +27.86% and +18.76% for the 1-, 5- and 10 years ended June 30, 1999, respectively.

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IT was March of 1996, and I was in the TV room of a truck stop in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. I was the only one in the room, typing out poems on an electric typewriter so that I could send in my application to the M.F.A. program at the University of Alabama. A driver walked in, a black guy in his fifties, and sat down in front of the TV. There was a football game on.

"I hope the typewriter doesn't bother you," I said to him. "I'm about done."

"Naw, it won't bother me. What you typing, anyway?"

I thought about lying, but I told him. "A bunch of poems. I'm applying to graduate school in creative writing."

"You a driver?"

"Yeah, I drive for Proline."

"Graduate school. That means you went to college, got a degree, now you're driving a truck, and you're gonna go back? How can you afford all that?"

"If I get in, they'll have me teach freshman English, but I won't have to pay tuition and I'll get paid enough to live on."

"Well, there you go," he said, laughing. "Beats the hell out of driving a truck, don't it?"

THE trucks are on CB channel 19. When there's a lot of CB traffic, you might be able to hear and be heard for only about a mile or two in each direction. Late at night you'll get a little more range. Most of the talk is about business: eastbounders asking westbounders where the cops are, how the weather is behind them, how traffic is rolling through town. If you want to shoot the breeze with someone about life in general, good form dictates that you take it to another channel after a couple of minutes. But late at night nobody much minds that kind of conversation.

The CB is like weather, each radio putting out a cloud of conversation, or maybe keeping silent like a patch of blue sky. Conversations build like storms, dissipating when the energy is talked out of them. If you're rolling the same way as the conversation, you'll be with it for a while—hundreds of miles sometimes. But if a bunch of eastbounders are talking and you're westbound, you'll hear only a few minutes of it; then you'll blow through it as if it were a squall line.

A movie like *Smokey and the Bandit* would have you believe that all truckers talk in numbers, in an obscure code that takes years to master. Not so. There are a

few operative numbers, but trucker talk is more thesaural than codified, privileging euphemism over shorthand. To talk like a trucker you need to acquire the art of understatement. You need to have several ways of saying the same thing without using the literal description.

First off, you need to know how to address other drivers. "Driver" is the preferred term. "Hand" is acceptable. "Good buddy" is not. "Good buddy" is an insult,

*A weigh station is a
"chicken coop." A
tire tread in the road
is a "gator." A toll-
booth is a "cashbox."*

implying that someone is a *good* buddy. Save that for when a driver gobbles up half your lane while he's trying to pass you around a curve and when you ask him if he's all right, he says, "You just mind yourself, driver." Tell him, "Well, you just keep on truckin' there, good buddy." That'll burn him up.

You can also address a driver by the truck he's driving: "Hey, cabover..." (type of truck); "Peterbilt, you got it on?" (make of truck); "Northbound Averitt..." (name of company); "Hey, parking lot..." (car carrier); "Mr. Chicken Hauler..." (chicken hauler).

You've got to know what to call things. A car is a "four-wheeler"—usually used pejoratively, often preceded by "damn." An eighteen-wheeler is a "bigtruck." A cop is a "bear," a "smokey," a "smokey-bear," a "full-grown bear," a "plain-wrapper" (unmarked), a "county mountie" (as opposed to a state trooper), or a "bear in the air" (in a helicopter). If he's got his lights going, he's "running the discos." If he's got a car pulled over, he's got a "customer," or a "captured four-wheeler," or simply a "captured." A smokey on an on-ramp with a radar gun is "shooting you in the back." From an overpass he's "shooting you in the face." If he's in the median, he's "in the comedian."

A weigh station is a "chicken coop." If the coops are closed, you can say "The coops are closed," but it's better to say

"locked up," or "six letters," or "The big word, driver. Mash your motor." If the scales are open, they're "wide open," or "rolling you across," or "checking your ground pressure."

A tire tread in the road is a "gator." If there's ever a real alligator in the road, I don't know what you say. The left lane is the "hammer lane," the right lane is the "granny." A rest area is a "pickle park," a tollbooth is a "cashbox," an ambulance is a "meat wagon," mile markers are "yardstickers," the interstate is "the big road," a two-lane is a "skinny." An accident is a "wreck," but if you're going to describe the wreck, don't get too creative with adjectives and action verbs. "A bigtruck and a four-wheeler got together." That's enough.

In general, cities and states should be referred to by their nicknames. If you're northbound in Kentucky and trying to tell a southbounder that you haven't seen anything since an accident you passed around Nashville, you say, "You look good back to the Volunteer. There's a wreck before you hit the Guitar, but it might be rolling all right now." New Orleans is "the Mardi Gras"; Birmingham is "Smoke City," or simply "the Smoke"; Chicago is "the Windy"; Fort Wayne is "the Fort."

Sometimes you'll hear a "10-36" (time check) or a "10-33" (accident), but the only numbers you really need are 20, 10-4, and 42. 20 means "location." "20 on the full-grown?"

"He's rolling south, just put the thirty-eight yardsticker in his pocket, discos goin'." A "10-4" would be appropriate here, or "Copy the thirty-eight."

42 is 10-4's first cousin. 10-4 means "I heard what you said," and 42 means "I hear what you're saying."

"Northbound, how's it looking getting through that construction?"

"Clusterfuck, driver. I'd go the bypass around it."

"10-4 on the bypass, 'preciate it."

"There ain't but two seasons out here anymore: winter and construction."

"42 on that."

10-4 can be split up and used as a sort of call and response. "Southbound, you're gonna want to run the bypass around this construction, -4?"

"Yeah, 10-. I was just thinking that. You look good back to the Wolverine. Coops are locked up."

Whatever you do, don't throw in too

many truckingisms. Not many guys say "Keep on trucking." "Have a good ride your way" is better. Once you've driven for twenty years, you'll have earned the right to say something hokey like "Keep her between the ditches." But by then you'll know enough not to say it.

I'VE had one wreck.

February 9, 1996, I was westbound on I-80 in Ohio, headed to Sheboygan, Wisconsin, with a load of plastic out of Rumford, Maine. It was a Friday. The load didn't deliver until Monday, lots of extra time, so I could've run it straight up to Wisconsin and maybe dropped it on a lot and grabbed another load, or at least gotten layover pay for sitting in Sheboygan for a couple of days. But instead I had made plans to stop at the University of Notre Dame to visit a friend of mine from Holy Cross who was in the M.F.A. program there. It was worth the lost miles to check out the program, to be on a college campus again, to hang out with people who weren't twice my age and twice my weight.

I woke up around eleven that morning in the last rest area in Pennsylvania before the Ohio line. I'd stopped there the night before because I was out of hours, and I didn't want to cross the Ohio scales until I could catch my logbook up. Those scales were sure to be open (the Buckeye never shuts), and I was afraid that fueling up in Buckhorn, Pennsylvania, had put me a few pounds over on my drive axle. I left a little before noon, rolled through the Buckeye coops, no problem, and figured I could be in South Bend by six or so.

The day was gray but unthreatening, the traffic moderate, the road dry. I knocked off fifty miles of Ohio, making good time. Then I saw a four-wheeler on the eastbound side drive into the median. I figured it was a cop turning around. He had no business with me, but I didn't want to get tangled up with him as he swung onto my side, so I backed it down some and grabbed the CB: "Westbound, look out, we got a bear swapping over"—but it wasn't a cop. A brown car, a Ford Fairmont maybe, came careening up out of the ditch, flying like a cornerback, coming at me—"Look out! Fucking look out!" I dropped the mike. I didn't know where to swerve. He had the angle on me. I didn't think I would miss him if I tried to go inside, so I steered hard for the right shoulder.

It didn't sound like much—hardly more than the noise of running over a full can of beer. If the impact of the Ford slowed the truck down, I didn't feel it. I figured there wouldn't be much damage, but as I tried to stop in the breakdown lane, my brakes locked up from an air leak. I tried to rev the engine to build the air back up, so that I could move the truck farther off the road, but the gauges stayed on zero. I opened the door of the cab and found the steps crunched up, the fuel tank mangled, and diesel leaking all over the place. I jumped out to set my triangles and found that a drive tire was missing—not flat but gone.

The car was maybe 800 yards behind me. I had rolled a while before coming to a stop, and he had spun off. His car had come to rest in the hammer lane down the road, and was surrounded by people who had stopped. I decided to stay with my truck.

I had been pretty calm to this point, had done the things I was supposed to do: prevent a second accident, warn others, all that. But my next responsibility, checking on the other driver, now terrified me. I climbed back into the cab and heard on the CB "Proline, you okay in there?"

Yes, I was okay. "Anyone down there can tell me about the driver?" I was really scared now. "Is he dead?"

A voice came back: "They got him covered up with a blanket, driver . . ."

In that moment I knew that for as long as I lived, I would be someone who had killed someone else. And it didn't matter that it had happened in just seconds, that I had been on my side of the road, that it wasn't my fault. My mind was thrumming, circling around and around this new fact.

Then the trucker completed his thought. "But, yeah, he's talking, he's moving. His leg's busted up pretty bad, but he's okay." I looked out at I-80, at the 187-mile marker, at the gray Ohio day, a place that I would never have been able to leave, and I thanked God for sparing that man's life and, yes, for sparing mine.

I was glad my logbook looked good. The troopers and the Department of Transportation officer found no problems. A big wrecker came and pulled the truck and trailer off the pike into a hook-and-drop lot by the cashbox. And there we sat, the wrecker driver and I, for hours, waiting for fifty-five-gallon drums to arrive from the Ohio DOT so that he could

offload the fuel from the busted tank. I was freezing. I smoked one cigarette after another, trying to forget the fact that I was hungry. I called my friend at Notre Dame, hoping to tell my story, but I got his answering machine.

The wrecker driver split up the truck and trailer, and another Proline driver bobtailed in to take the trailer to be fixed and have the load reloaded. I don't think the DOT ever showed up with the drums, so the wrecker driver finally said screw it. He towed the truck twenty miles back toward Youngstown, where there was an International dealer shop. It turned out that the truck's frame was damaged—which is pretty hard for a car to do to a truck without someone's dying.

The bill I signed off on for the tow was \$1,400—200 bucks an hour—out of which the wrecker driver would make fifty dollars.

I got to stay in a hotel that night—a luxury for someone who lives in a truck. I found a hotel with a bar. I ate dinner, got a room, and took a long hot shower.

The bar looked like it hadn't been refurbished since the fifties. It was full of truck drivers. I mean precisely full. When I walked in, there was one seat at the bar, and for the rest of the night if one person left, one person came in. There was never an extra seat for more than two minutes, and never a seat too few. Blonde fiftyish twins tended the bar. I sat next to an enormous guy from Boston, who was ordering beer by the pitcher. For a while I just drank my beer and listened to an argument that he was having with a guy at the other end of the bar, a trucker from Iowa who was saying that all truckers ought to unionize. Everyone in the bar was in on the argument, but the two main players were Boston and Iowa—the latter a rather ungratifying guy: sort of a thirtysomething flaxen-haired Ross Perot. "Hey, Boston," Iowa would say, and then he'd go off on some spiel about how truckers could all be home every night if they wanted to.

"Hey, Iowa, what if I don't want to go home? Huh? You're probably not married, a guy like you, so yeah, *you* probably *want* to be home."

"Hey, Boston, just so you know, I've got a girlfriend at home, and another . . ."

They kept going back and forth, not building any sort of consensus, not wanting to. Just trash-talking. In a lull I got talking to Boston, told him I was from Scituate. After a while I got to

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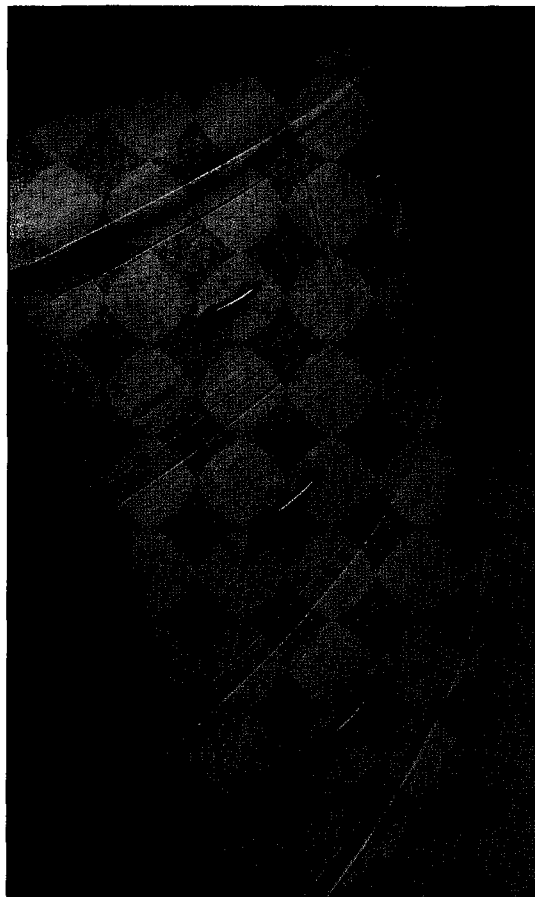
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tell my story. "I'm thinking it's a bear, gonna swap around, so I'm on the CB..."

I didn't pay for many drinks after that. I mean, I had a pretty good story. I had done good. Everyone agreed: if I had swerved left, I might have hit the guy head on, or else missed him but rolled the trailer on top of him, or missed him but hit someone else. I was the youngest person in the bar, so I was the recipient of a lot of "I wish, when I was starting out like

*A brown car, a Ford
Fairmont maybe, came
careening out of the
ditch, flying at me like
a cornerback.*

you are, somebody had told me..."

After last call I went up to my room and flopped down on the bed. I turned the TV on and then turned it off. I was thinking about the man in the brown car, replaying the scene over and over. I wondered how he was doing, and I knelt down beside the bed and tried to pray. But I couldn't. I was drunk off my ass, a caricature of piety, and I knew it.

FROM the Sigmund Freud file:

Driver #1: "Hey, flatbed, don't miss this girl coming up in this red four-wheeler."

Driver #2: "What's she look like?"

Driver #1: "I just barely got a look at her. Pretty legs on her. Don't miss it."

Driver #2: "You know I won't. Tell you what, I'll grab this hammer lane and slow her up so you can come on and get a look. Then you let me back over so I get a good look at her."

Driver #1: "Now you're talkin'."

Driver #3: "From the sound of it, maybe the two of you oughta get together."

IDROVE for Proline for six months. I wasn't making much money with them. I wasn't getting miles and I wasn't going to run west. I quit in April and drove a cab in Worcester for a couple of weeks. I had been accepted at Alabama for the fall, and I thought about sticking around Worcester, or living at home for a while,

but both scenarios struck me as odious, so I got a job with Direct Transit Incorporated and went back on the road for three months.

Esprit de corps was lacking at DTI. So were good trucks, pleasant dispatchers, and competent drivers. Even Direct drivers disliked Direct drivers. I nearly got into a fistfight in Dallas when a receiver told me to back into a dock ahead of another DTI truck. The other driver jumped up onto my running board while I was backing up, opened my door when I stopped, and jumped down into a fighter's crouch.

I still see DTI trailers all over the place, but no DTI trucks: they went bankrupt shortly after I left. I could carry the outfit for only so long.

After DTI it was two years before I drove a bigtruck again. The summer after my first year at Alabama I just did some temp work, driving a straight truck for a while—a humbling experience, like being sent down to triple-A after making it for a while in the big leagues. Last year I got back into the action. In May I drove a tanker for the first and only time. I took a road test for a company that ran gasoline and asphalt, and I managed to remember how to drive well enough to get the job. But I never worked for them; I have a better job with Holingsworth Trucking, bringing parts down from Battle Creek, Michigan, for the Mercedes plant in Tuscaloosa County. We run up to Michigan carrying empty racks, run back with full ones. No sitting around at food warehouses, waiting to unload. I drive up there and go to sleep, and when they're ready to load me up, they rap on my door and load me up quick and I'm gone.

YOU'RE going to have to take a leak. There's no way around it. We call it "getting a tirewash," and how a truck driver manages this aspect of the job may determine his success or failure.

First off, pulling into a truck stop just to go to the bathroom is a waste of time. If you need to buy smokes or sodas or whatever, and you go to the bathroom because you're there, that's fine. But don't fool yourself. If you're buying stuff because you had to stop for the restroom anyway, then you're in the truck stop primarily for that reason, which is a shame. That's the kind of thing a four-wheeler would do.

Rest areas would seem to be a good option, but often all the spaces for big-

trucks will be taken, so you wind up stopping on the shoulder of the on-ramp. If you're going to have to do it that way, at least find a ramp of your own, where you get some privacy.

On-ramps are better than off-ramps, because you're less likely to be run over trying to get the truck onto the shoulder. It's best to find an on-ramp that's on a downslope, to help you get back up to speed when you're ready to roll again. Because I run a regular route now, I have a few favorites. Exit 112 on I-65 north in Tennessee is a good one—wide shoulder, downslope, commanding hilltop view. In Alabama exit 318 on the southbound is a gem. The ramp cuts into a rock face that rises twenty feet above the shoulder, clung to by daring pine trees and vines with orange flowers. Crickets chirp. A cave is notched into the base of the rock. Stopping here is like taking a little camping trip.

I've heard of drivers who rig up a funnel with a tube running out under the truck through the gearbox, and when they need to, they just stand up—easy in a high-rise cab—and take care of business while driving down the road.

I find this troubling on several fronts. But my main objection is that those drivers are missing out on what can be a great part of the job. Okay, so maybe America isn't the frontier land that it used to be. Maybe TV and corporate conglomerates have homogenized the hell out of the place, and the interstates have turned travel into an adventureless algorithm. But when you fuel up in Portland, Tennessee, and it's 50° at 10:00 P.M., and you don't stop until you jump off at a ramp in Van Buren, Indiana, in the middle of the night, and you climb out of the truck into air twenty degrees cooler than Tennessee's, and the red clay has been replaced by brown dirt, and the land is flat and the night is dark and the stars are as bright as sparks from a cigarette thrown out the window, and your breath fogs and drifts up and mingles with the exhaust trail from the smokestack, and you walk around the truck and wash a tire next to a drowsy cornfield, and you look up and the night is so black you can see a satellite ping-pong along in shallow space, and in short sleeves the air feels like real weather, cold like home at this time of year, and you are not home, you are on the road, you climb back into the cab and you feel as if you've been born again. ☸

OCTOBER
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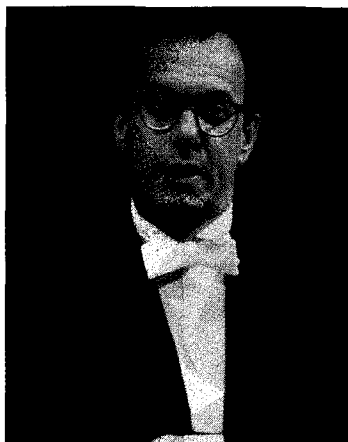
BY AUSTIN BAER

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

Who among American artists in all media has had the widest and most lasting influence? The answer is surely the short-lived Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849). Generation after generation of writers and visual artists absorbed his mad, incantatory prose and verse like a drug. Composers have proved no less susceptible, for reasons that are hardly mysterious. To an uncanny degree Poe cast his spells through the magic of sheer sound. (Think only of the obsessive “Nevermore,” tolling through “The Raven” like a death knell.) This month Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra commemorate the 150th anniversary of the poet’s death with music prompted by his writings (October 15, Avery Fisher

Hall, Lincoln Center, New York; 212-721-6500). Two early-twentieth-century works from France—André Caplet’s *Conte fantastique* (based on “The Masque of the Red Death”) and Florent Schmitt’s *Le Palais hanté*—conjure up Poe’s visions by purely instrumental means. In Sergei Rachmaninoff’s phantasmagorical *The Bells* and Einojuhani Rautavaara’s *On the Last Frontier* (a North American premiere) the poet’s voice is heard in the voices of a chorus. The text

for the Rachmaninoff is an adaptation, but Rautavaara—a contemporary Finnish composer with an excellent command of English—gives us Poe straight, in pages from *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. Botstein, a professor and conductor who constructs concert programs the way he would compile the reading list for a graduate seminar, thus invites us to consider the range of responses to Poe’s morbid genius.



Leon Botstein

ZEMLINSKY RETURNS

In the musical Bloomsbury of *fin de siècle* Vienna, Alexander Zemlinsky (1871–1942) was definitely a force. Brahms admired him, Schoenberg studied with him, Mahler conducted his premieres—not to mention amorous and matrimonial liaisons within the tight little circle. By the time he died, in Larchmont, New York, a fugitive from the Nazis, his name was forgotten. Today, despite continuing crusades by such maestros as James Conlon and Riccardo Chailly, he remains more a footnote than a presence. Still, the tide may be turning. Certainly the performances this month of his *Lyrische Symphonie* (first played in Prague in 1924) by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Seiji Ozawa are a hopeful sign (October 7, 8, 9, 12; 617-266-1200). Running fifty uninterrupted minutes, the score takes the form of an epic symphonic song cycle divided between a baritone and a soprano—“along the lines of *Das Lied von der Erde*,” the composer informed his publisher in a letter, alluding to Mahler’s sublime symphony in song, which is of comparable duration and also involves a pair of alternating soloists. But within the ripe



Seiji Ozawa conducts the BSO

late-Romantic idiom that is common to the two works, their imaginative worlds are distinct. Inspired by classic Chinese poetry, Mahler spun out a supersubtle, achingly personal meditation on the evanescence of all created things, coming into being and disappearing like breath on a mirror. Zemlinsky, setting the fashionable mystical kitsch

of the Bengali Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, unfurls a tapestry in which barbaric splendor contends for dominance with ecstatic rapture. The writing for the soloists—strangely monumental for the baritone; like looping ribbons of molten candle wax for the soprano—enhances the aura of allegorical possibility that permeates the texts; the total effect brings to this listener’s mind the timeless Hindu image of the divine embrace, erotic symbol of the interpenetration of spirit and matter. Whether Zemlinsky was thinking this way is anybody’s guess, but the power and sensuality are there.

INDIAN SUMMER

We know this can’t last forever, but at fifty-eight, Plácido Domingo is showing no signs of fading away. Even as he collects new administrative positions (artistic director of The Washington Opera, artistic director designate of the Los Angeles Opera, with rumors swirling of a similar post at Argentina’s Teatro Colón, the greatest house of the Southern Hemisphere), the Spanish super tenor continues to outperform colleagues twenty years his junior. This month in Washington he returns to the title role of Massenet’s *Le Cid*, an eleventh-century champion torn between family honor and allegiance to

his native Spain. Last staged in America in 1902, this rousing epic comes to us now in a production from Seville, directed and designed by Hugo de Ana, whose gift for heroic pomp and circumstance is unrivaled today. Expect nothing less than opera at



Plácido Domingo as Le Cid

its grandest, with a hero to match. Don’t miss it. (October 30, November 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22; 202-295-2400.)

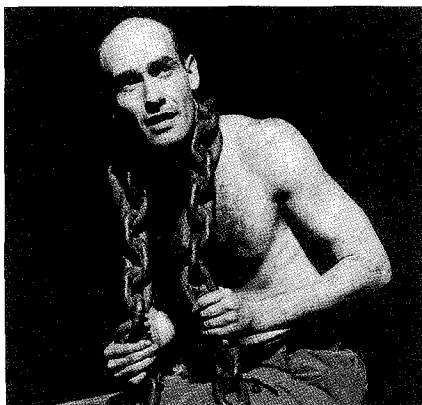
Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

Dance and Theater

BY NANCY DALVA AND JOHN ISEL

DREAM TEAMS

Mad or not, my hour is come, and I/Will have my reckoning." So says poor Prince Segismundo in *Life Is a Dream*, the masterwork of the Spanish Golden Age playwright Pedro Calderón de la Barca. The seventeenth-century dramatist has his day of reckoning this month, when two adventurous directors mount his metaphysical musings on power, patriarchy, and the mercurial nature of reality. JoAnne Akalaitis brings the play to Chicago's Court Theatre (through October 10). At the Brooklyn Academy of Music (October 12-17) the Catalan director Calixto Bieito offers his raunchy Royal Lyceum Theatre Company production, the hit of the 1998 Edinburgh Festival. It's no surprise that enterprising directors fall for Calderón's tale. A Polish king studies the



Life Is a Dream

stars and divines that his son, Segismundo, will usurp him, so he locks the prince in a tower to be raised in isolation. When a peaceful succession is threatened by warring factions, he's forced to try letting his son be king for a day. The experiment is a disaster, but not before Calderón has beguiled audiences with Segismundo's hapless attempts to comprehend his dreamlike life. The work, which some claim rivals *Lear* or *Faust*, rarely appears on U.S. stages. Perhaps the 400th anniversary of Calderón's birth next year will make more *Dreams* become reality. —J.I.

Nancy Dalva's essays appear in the magazine twice. John Isel is the editor-in-chief of Stagebill.

HIS FAIR LADY

"Ballet is woman," George Balanchine said, and at any point in his life it would have been appropriate to mutter "He ought to know." Famously enchanted by his ballerinas, he married several, beginning—as a young man in Russia—with Tamara Geva. Next came Alexandra Danilova (an "unofficial" wife, owing to the complexities of expatriate life in France). In the United States there were the Hollywood star Vera Zorina, the Native American beauty Maria Tallchief, and, finally, the piquant and enchanting and very young Tanaquil LeClercq, stricken by polio early in their union. He left her only in hopes of marrying the still younger Suzanne Farrell, who when they met was of an age to be his granddaughter. He courted; she demurred. He choreographed; she danced. He proposed; she married another, a New York City Ballet dancer who was her peer—at least in years. The newlyweds fled to Brussels and the company and choreography of Maurice Béjart. Farrell returned to New York. Balanchine took her back into his company. There has been a tendency over the years to sensationalize this apparently uncon-

summated affair (given the ingredients, that's not hard to do) and to carry on about unrequited love, May-December unions, and the like. But the Balanchine-Farrell relationship was utterly and publicly fulfilled, in the time-honored way for artists and their muses: in their art. Balanchine made the most wonderful dances in the world for Farrell, and she was the most wonderful dancer. Now she tosses her hat into the ring as a compa-

ny director, staging dances by Balanchine and Jerome Robbins and an excerpt from Béjart's *Romeo and Juliet*, suitably enough. (Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., October 21-24; Modlin Center, Richmond, VA, October 26-27; State Theatre, New Brunswick, NJ,



Suzanne Farrell workshop

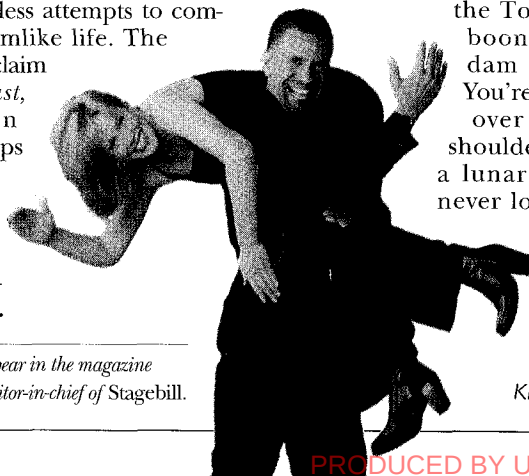
October 29; Bardavon Opera House, Poughkeepsie, NY, October 30. November performances in Pomona, NJ; Philadelphia, PA; Stony Brook, NY; Concord, NH; Bethlehem, PA; and New York City, at the New Victory Theater.) Farrell has her fans rooting for her with all their hearts. She was the ballerina of a lifetime for those lucky enough to see her. Balanchine did not just love her—he showed us why, and how, and let us count the ways. —N.D.

PRET À PORTER

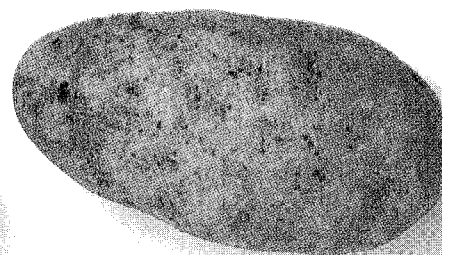
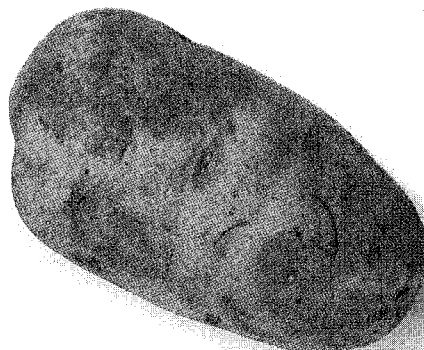
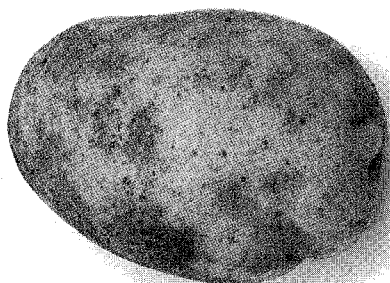
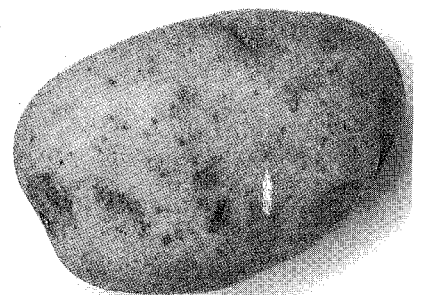
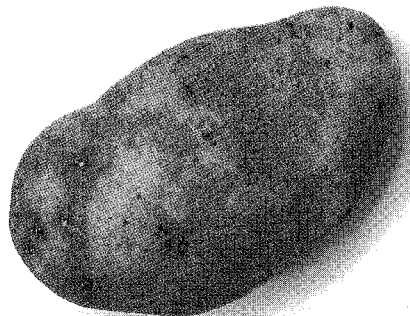
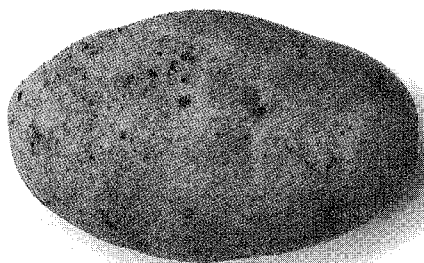
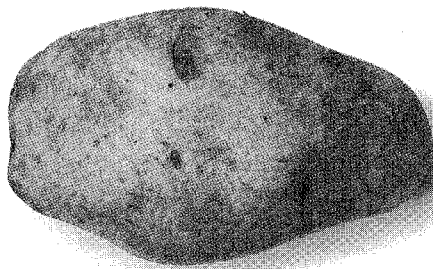
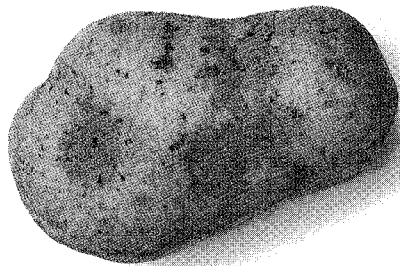
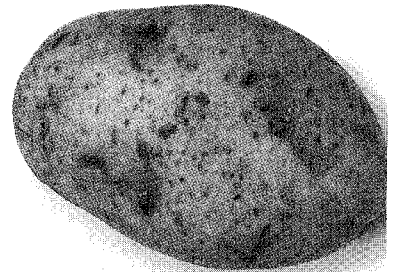
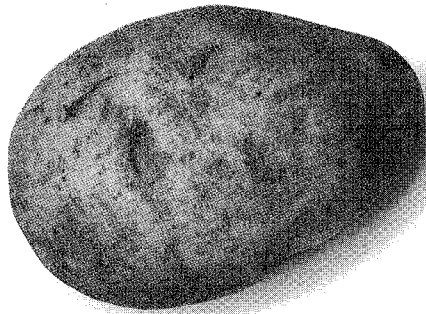
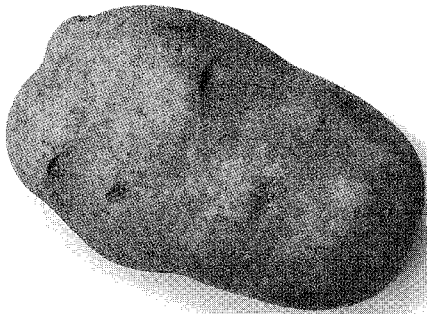
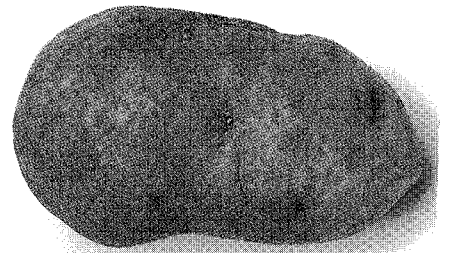
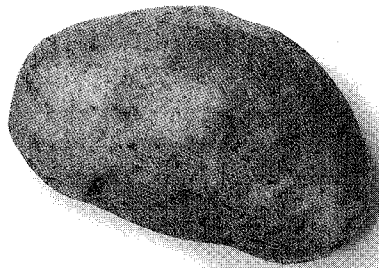
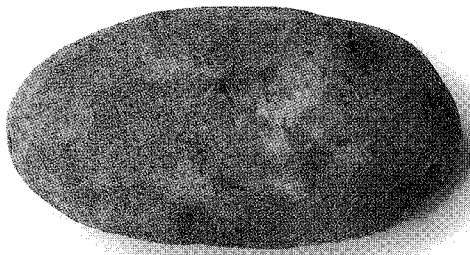
Good poetry teachers tell you that if you're going to write about the moon, you must use new metaphors. Take these lines from Cole Porter's popular "You're the Top": "You're a boon,/You're the dam at Boulder,/You're the moon. . . over Mae West's shoulder." Somehow a lunar eclipse may never look the same.

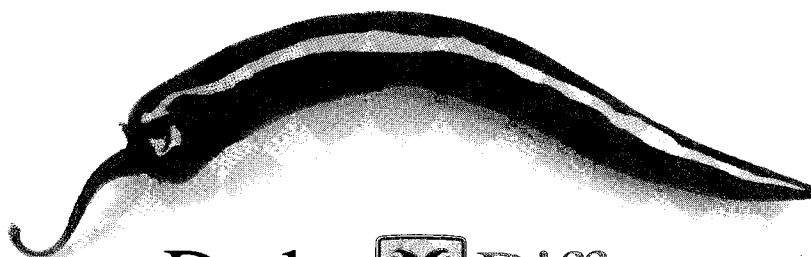
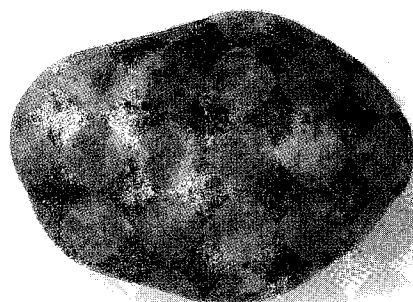
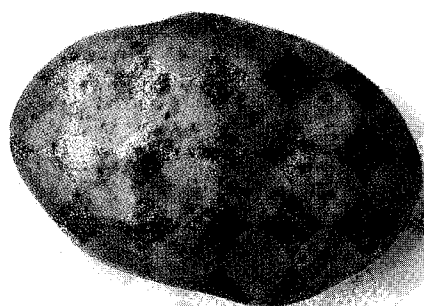
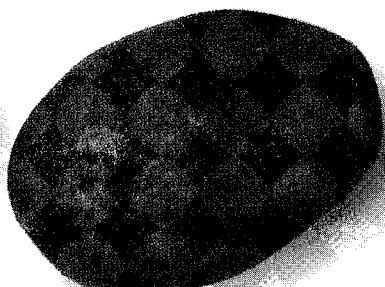
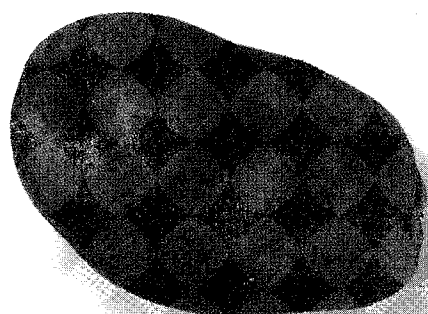
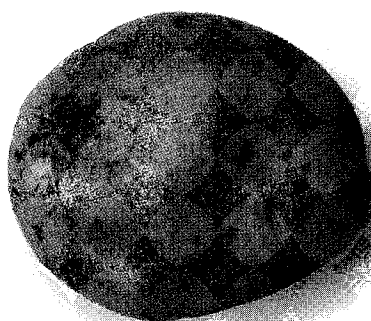
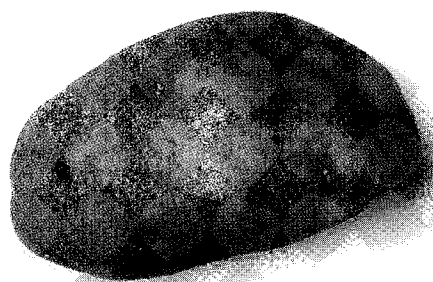
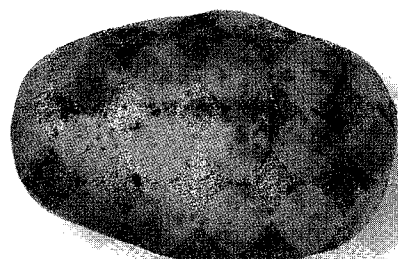
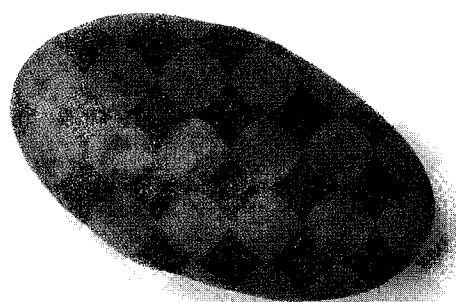
Because he had enough wit and sophistication to sink a

ship, you can make a case that the songwriter was one of the country's best poets. Since *Anything Goes* in the 1980s, little Porter has gone on Broadway (except for the recent, short-lived hodgepodge *High Society*). Well, as countless theater scribes will note, it's time to "Brush Up Your Shakespeare." *Kiss Me, Kate* begins previews this month (October 25) for a November 18 opening at the Martin Beck Theatre, in New York. The musical comedy, which hasn't been on Broadway since its opening, fifty-one years ago, stars Brian Stokes Mitchell and Marin Mazzie, *Ragtime*'s Tony-caliber performers, as the dueling director and his temperamental leading lady. Despite his urbane image, Porter can out-bawdy the bard: "If she says your behavior is heinous/Kick her right in the Coriolanus." —J.I.



Kiss Me, Kate





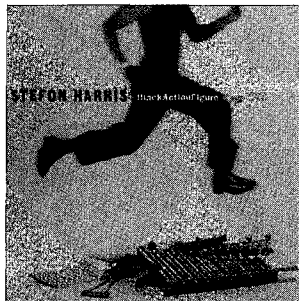
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BY BOB BLUMENTHAL AND CHARLES M. YOUNG

A VIBIST ARRIVES

The vibraphone may blend rhythm and melody in a way that makes it an ideal jazz instrument, but vibes players are among the music's rarest commodities. A young vibist with the technique and versatility of Stefon Harris is therefore bound to attract attention; but the twenty-six-year-old newcomer has more than impressive appearances with proven leaders like Joe Henderson, Buster Williams, and Wynton Marsalis to his credit. Harris's first Blue Note CD, *A Cloud of Red Dust*, was voted Recording Debut of the Year at the 1998 Jazz Awards in New York, and his new *Black Action Figure* is just as fresh and challenging—but with a difference. The virtuosic attack and echoes of modern symphonic as well as jazz influences remain, signs of Harris's training as a classical percussionist; but where *Red Dust* drew much of its



character from an emphasis on Latin and African beats, *Black Action Figure* employs a smaller rhythm section and obtains a more open group sound. This allows Harris to explore the vivid combinations he creates when his vibes are paired with Steve Turre's trombone or Gary Thomas's alto flute, without in any way draining the music of its power; but the vibist is not only concerned with swinging hard. He is the rare young musician who creates albums with an overall pace and shape, and he has molded this collection with careful attention to variations in tempo and brief, effective transitional inserts. Harris is also willing to go out with a whisper, and underscores his uniqueness and maturity by allowing his diverse original compositions to build to the dramatic ballad "Faded Beauty."

—B.B.

ELECTRIC BLUES

In the credits for *Moving to the Country* (Tone-Cool), Paul Rishell lists his guitars (National Reso-Phonic and Fender) and Annie Raines her harmonicas (Hohner). It might have been appropriate to list their vitamins, because their audience might like to know where their utterly invigorating, more-contagious-than-the-latest-flu-germ-from-Asia energy comes from. Bioflavonoids? Folic acid? Megadoses of beta carotene? There must be some physical explanation for the sheer joy they bring to the blues. Stylistically, they play a primitive, sloppy form of blues with sophistication and accuracy. Tight but loose, as Led Zeppelin used to say. Heavy but light, as no one used to say. They also play electric and acoustic, venture into jazz a bit, and make use of the occasional side musician. Rishell fingerpicks his guitars in various tunings, stirring up a surprising array of flavors: tang, sting, sweet, sour,



Paul Rishell and Annie Raines

maybe a quarter cup of fish sauce and an equal amount of lime juice. In fact, forget the vitamins. Think of the best coconut chicken soup you ever had in a Thai restaurant. Further think of Raines's harmonica as six stalks of lemongrass, one cup of chopped coriander, and ten chilies. In other words, lots of heat but also plenty of subtle variation under the theme. Side dishes include Django Reinhardt and Stephen Grappelli ("Tears," on which Raines plays the succulent violin part on harmonica), Memphis Minnie ("My Washerwoman's Gone"), and Blind Blake ("Sweet Jivin' Mama"). The main course, though, is Rishell and Raines. If you want a second helping, try their previous and equally delicious album, *I Want You To Know*.

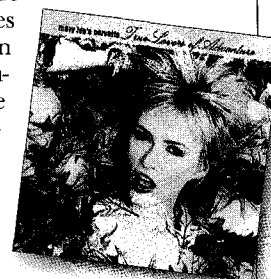
—C.M.Y.

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe. Charles M. Young reviews popular music for Playboy, Musician, and other publications.

FULL DISCLOSURE

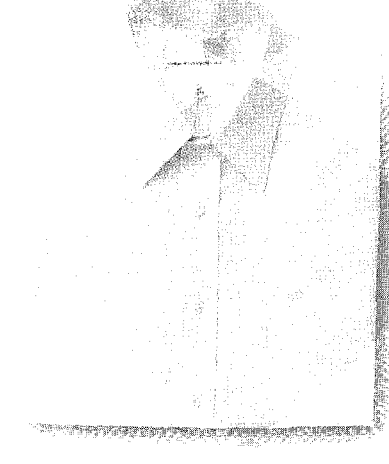
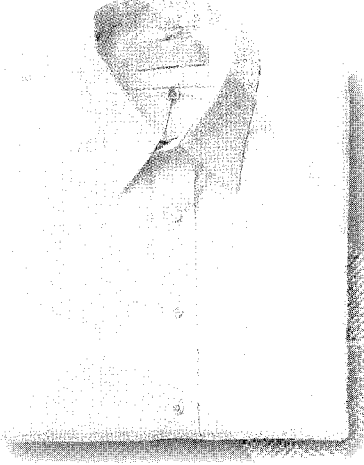
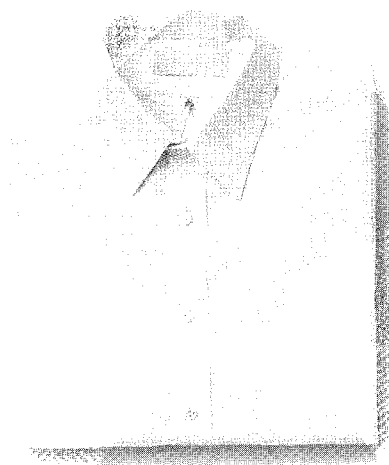
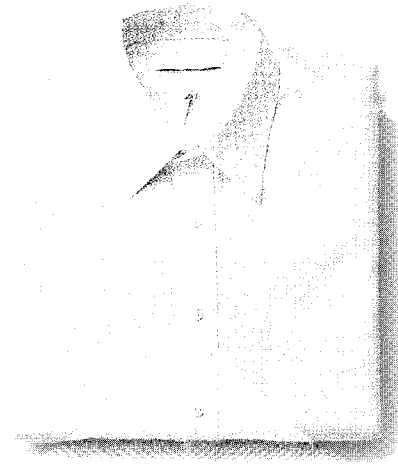
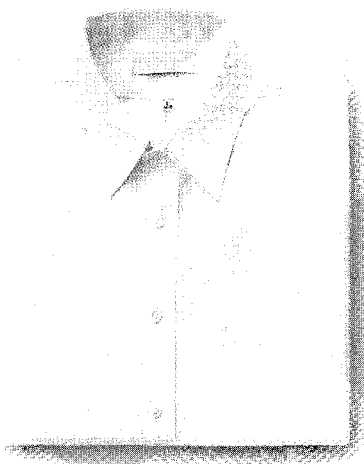
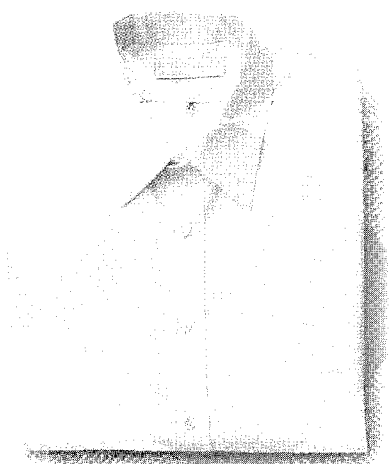
In the seventies Linda Ronstadt and Judy Collins had a way of putting together songs that made an album a complete work of art, giving the listener a sense of having read a good novel that hit the full range of emotions. And they didn't hide those emotions behind a big wall of irony and postmodern crud. Mary Lee Kortes, which consists of Mary Lee Kortes and a changing group of superb backup musicians, achieves a similar feel on *True Lovers of Adventure* (Wild Pitch). One of those rare singers with a noticeable personality and all the traditional qualities of a great voice (in pop music you usually get one or the other), Kortes performs and writes in a surprising array of styles, ranging from smoky jazz to classical to medieval to rock-and-roll to folk, arranging them with minimal obeisance to the strictures of pop. Verse, bridge, chorus, hook, solo, drastic change of mood—any of them can show up anywhere. The words scan all over the place, with few rhymes, but somehow fall unerringly into the melodies, most of which are gorgeous. "Why Don't You Leave Him?," about domestic abuse, is an early front-runner for most memorable melody of the year, and the lyrics are heartbreaking.

—C.M.Y.



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the train picks up speed through the dark northern forests, the kids go to sleep, and they sleep uninterruptedly through the night. I wake occasionally to a sensation of trundling comfort so profound that I might try to imagine it to put myself to sleep if I weren't in it already.

In the morning we get up and open the curtains and look at the sunrise on the mile-wide Columbia River, now beside us. We have a breakfast of juice and doughnuts that's laid out in the porter's room, and then we walk through the train a few times and sit in the observation car and notice our reflections in the glass as we go through the dark tunnels. At about ten o'clock the train arrives in Portland, and our friends Don and Jane, the people we have come to visit, meet us, and we pick up a lot of Cheetos and Cokes and videos for the kids on the way to their house. The kids are rested and happy; what would have been a day and a half of arduous driving has telescoped into a dream; and the tickets cost about \$400 total, less than the plane.

—IAN FRAZIER

Worth the Trip

*What delivers good value for dollar on vacation?
Atlantic editors and contributors share
their thoughts*

Getting There Is Half the Fun

HERE'S my favorite travel deal: I call Dawne, my travel agent, and she gets tickets for my two children (ages ten and six) and me for the sleeper car on the train from Whitefish, Montana, to Portland, Oregon. The sleeper on this train has a compartment at the very back that extends the full width of the car; there are windows on both sides. The compartment is big enough for two adults and two children, but my wife, who prizes a weekend to herself, doesn't go. Dawne reserves us that compartment, and on a Thursday afternoon the kids and I drive from our house in Missoula up to

Whitefish. The trip takes about three hours, and we have a dinner of sandwiches in the car. The Whitefish train station is a big building in an alpine-rustic style, so picturesque that it's used in Amtrak ads. We put our bags on the platform and explore the station, and the kids run around on the lawn. At about nine-thirty in the evening the train arrives, the shine from its headlight preceding it along the rails of the curving track. The porter, Larry, says, "This must be the Fraziers," and helps us to our compartment. The beds are already turned down, with chocolates on the pillows. The kids clamber all over, going in and out of the upper berth about twenty times. We put on our pajamas and read stories, and as

All You Can Eat

IN years of travel I've never found a more satisfying experience—fiscally, gastronomically, or, for that matter, spiritually—than dining in the vegetarian restaurants of South India. Entering these Spartan, spotless rooms, you're shown to a tiny table, on which a fresh green banana leaf (the ecologically perfect disposable dinnerware) has already been unrolled. For a dollar or two you're entitled to a mound of fluffy white rice surrounded by a half dozen little hills of different vegetables—all of them fiery, every one sublime. Waiters come by with buckets of clarified butter and sambar (a marvelous spicy gravy), which they ladle onto your rice; you're allowed as many helpings of vegetables as you wish, until you're full—or until the chilies have made your lips start burning unbearably. Silverware is not an option. You eat with your right hand, delicately blending a vegetable into the edge of the rice mound, forming the mixture into a ball, and using your thumb to propel it into your mouth.

Why travel if not to challenge and

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change your ideas—including those about something as basic as the proper way for food to get from the table to the tongue?

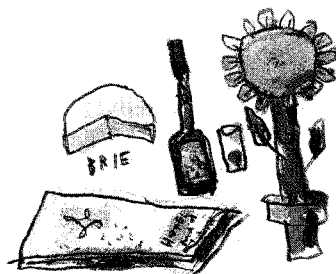
—FRANCINE PROSE

Make Yourself at Home

I FEEL about gourmet shops, particularly ones with prepared foods and ripe rare cheeses, the way some women are said to feel about shoe stores: I can't bear to pass one without buying something. (I also feel this way about paper stores, and pharmacies with sinuous carved Art Nouveau façades, whose interiors are lined with dark-wood glass-fronted cases.) Here is where I can see a new town's favorite dishes, just as the cook means to make them—something I always itch to see before ordering at a restaurant.

But where to consume the wild-mushroom lasagne, or the veal stew with colorful chunks of peppers, or the sea bass en gelée, or any other dish best eaten at room temperature and not in danger of spoiling after a few unrefrigerated hours? Picnic options can be limited, and outdoor eating requires inconvenient amounts of plastic cutlery and paper towels. Besides, it's so much nicer to eat off china and use silverware.

My solution is to turn my hotel room into a restaurant, washing and squirreling away crockery from room-service breakfasts or asking the hotel's bar or restaurant for rudimentary equipment—or, to be truthful if not honest, smuggling it when no one's looking. Linen is essential. I press into service hand towels or washcloths as napkins, and fresh bed-



side mats of polished cotton (standard in relatively modest European hotels, usually starched) as placemats. Among my first purchases after checking into a new hotel is an inexpensive flowering plant, which obviates begging or filching a vase.

The table—or desk, usually cleared of television—laid, I carefully unwrap and plate my prizes, which always include far too much bread and a piece or two of whichever cheese seemed least likely to reappear during my trip. Then I open a bottle of wine that I have collected during the day (my traveling pocketknife includes a corkscrew) or of beer brewed in the region.

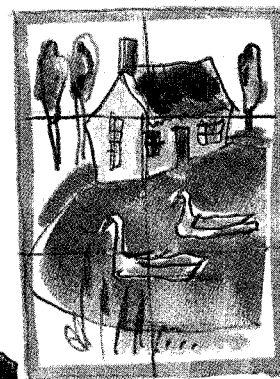
Some of my most pleasurable and revelatory traveling meals have been thus consumed, the day's newspaper or a guidebook as companion. And, of course, when I'm traveling with a live companion, few ways of dining can be more intimate.

—CORBY KUMMER

Everything Is Relative

ONCE, I bought a new pair of gloves, and when my mother asked how much they cost, being a young man on my own by then, I told her. Thereafter, when I would arrive at my parents' for a visit, she would greet me with "Here's Beatty in his ten-dollar gloves! It's a wonder he speaks to us anymore." The point is where she set the bar of luxury and pretension—worlds short of a Rolex. So if I had been told a year ago that spending \$350 a night to stay at a swank hotel would ever seem like a good deal, I would have said that such a thing was inconceivable. However, during a recent trip my wife and I made to Los Angeles, the inconceivable happened. How it did is a tale of two hotels.

What I will call "Hotel Hip," which sits on a relatively quiet street in West Hollywood, has its fans, some of them celebrities who stay there regularly. The relevant arbiters consider it chic. Now, call me a clueless tourist, but I do not think that a room like the one we were given, inspired by the notify-the-next-of-kin interiors in Edward Hopper's paintings, is chic. I think it is a nightmare. We had reserved a smoke-free room; the



hotel apologized but gave us instead one that smelled like an ashtray. In place of an honor bar was a snack dispensary to which, just like in the better gas stations, one fed money to get food.

I skip over the sliding-glass doors, the kind you see advertised ("Sliders!") in real-estate ads pitched to demolition-derby enthusiasts; the floor-to-ceiling plastoid drapes hiding the sliders; the dank patio ("Sliders to patio") and the Superfund site surrounding it, which wore a necklace of cigarette butts (filters, lipstick) across what appeared to be an AstroTurf surface. Magnanimously, I say nothing against the two-watt fluorescent light in the bathroom except that it made me want never to look at myself in the mirror again. But the three phone calls from someone asking for "Joe" bear mentioning. And the knock at our door at 2:30 A.M. was not the frank knock of a waiter come to stock Charleston Chews in the snack machine but a furtive sort of knock—and for us it was the last straw. Although our reservations were for three days, we left at first light.

And repaired immediately to the Hotel Bel-Air, in a woodsy canyon just off Sunset Boulevard. The price was only marginally higher, but worth it—the place has a rustic magnificence. A portrait of Grace Kelly, who stayed there when in Los Angeles, hangs in the main hallway, and grace is the note of the Bel-Air, of the

Photograph by Frank Stewart

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great white swans in its garden lagoon, of the red-tiled roofs of the guest cottages, of the tasteful rooms—ours was in lemon and white—that you won't want to leave. Yes, a lunch consisting of a chicken sandwich and a fruit plate for \$40 got our attention. And the \$15 charge for a jar of peanuts in the honor bar did discourage late-night snacking. But with Hotel Hip—considered a luxury hotel just like the Bel-Air—in mind, we paid almost gladly.

—JACK BEATTY

Trading Up

COSSET yourself in inch-deep terry cloth all you want, but in the swankest hotel you're still a tourist in that town. With an apartment swap you get *in*—and it costs you virtually nothing. Try to find a better deal than that.

In my first exchange last year I swapped my Manhattan apartment for a two-bedroom Amsterdam flat. My host, Marcel Oden, by coincidence also a journalist, met me and my friend with flowers and took us with a crowd of his pals to West Pacific, a trendy restaurant in a former gas factory (and not in most guidebooks). At the little grocery shops to which Marcel directed me, by my third visit the shopkeepers greeted me as a regular, abandoning English for a torrent of friendly if bewildering Dutch.

From the list of acquaintances Marcel left—the novelist who could get us into parties, Marcel's parents, in the north, who could show us the waterworks—I called Fred Allers, in Utrecht, who gave us a private tour of his medieval canal house, which dates from 1300. We sipped *witte wijn* by the water on a *werven*, a brick terrace along the quaint Nieuwegracht. He also taught us to say "*lol*" ("great fun"), cautioning us not to pronounce it "*lul*" (a vulgar male anatomical reference).

Maybe you could learn this stuff from your hotel concierge.

Marcel was a considerate guest at my house, as most home exchangers are. Karl Costabel, who for the past ten years has run HomeLink International (www.homelink.org), one of the two largest and oldest exchange programs (the other is Intervac: www.intervac.com), says he only occasionally hears of problems, and most of them are trivial. The members (for an annual fee of \$93) are primarily

affluent professionals—professors, corporate officers, and the like—and two thirds are repeat members, from about fifty countries and every American state. To avoid worry, Costabel recommends locking up precious things or taking them to a friend's house. You can also ask for references. He himself once exchanged his four-bedroom house in Hawaii for a French count's Paris apartment and the use of his Rolls-Royce and Maserati.

Maybe he and I are luckier than most. I don't know. But this year the professor who agreed to exchange his Barcelona apartment for mine decided not to come to New York after all. "Don't worry," he wrote me, "you can still have our apartment. We'll be in our country house anyway."

—FRANCINE RUSSO

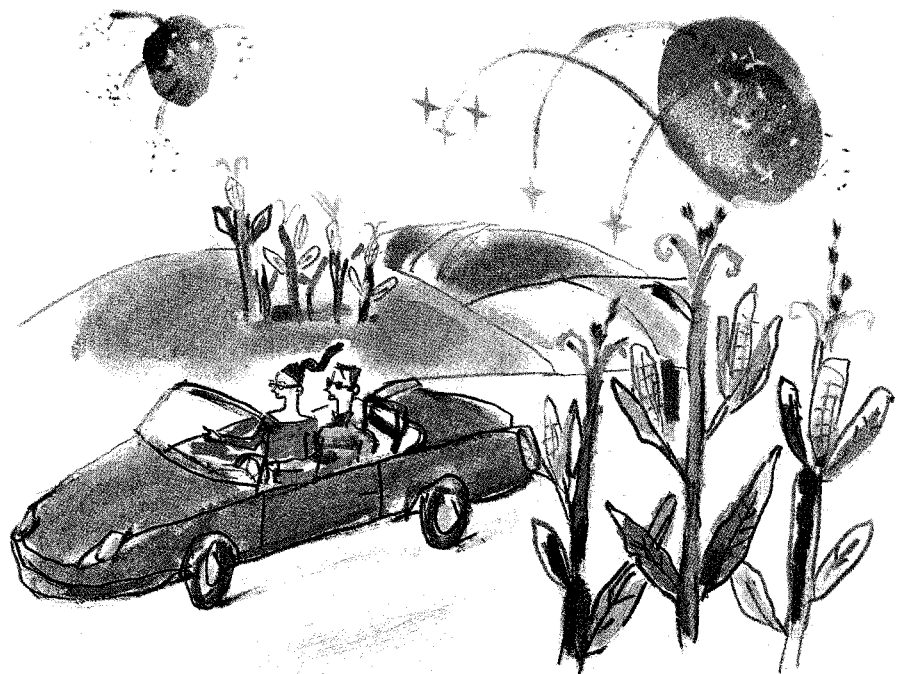
What Could Be Simpler?

GOOD value comes to those who procrastinate. Sometime in late June we'll realize that we never managed to plan a summer trip, so we'll toss the cat into the back of the car and drive out of town. Of course, we have to avoid all popular destinations (notoriously bad values), because they're already booked, so we travel back roads through the kind of places that wouldn't rate one star in the Michelin guide. In this way we've gotten

a sense of our country—seen the light change abruptly in the middle of Oklahoma from the soft, hazy glow of the East to the brilliance of the West, and seen architectures, populations, and accents shift in the South as we travel from low country to wire grass to piedmont to highlands.

If the purpose of a trip is not just to see something new but actually to feel somewhere else, this kind of travel fulfills it perfectly. Sometimes we're forced to eat in Pizza Huts and sleep in unairconditioned cinder-block motels, but more often, as we slip in and out of the everyday life and distinct pleasures of rural towns so markedly different from the urban center where we live, we discover sights and tastes and charms we would never have anticipated: fireworks over the fields of Great Bend, Kansas; a concert on the village green of Oberlin, Ohio; the huge yellow hills of the Walla Walla Valley; the best fried chicken in Arkansas (and therefore probably the best in the world); the shady courthouse towns of mid-Georgia; blue-ribbon pie in Middlebury, Indiana; and tasteful old hotels, sometimes surprisingly grand, in towns like Arcata, California, and Marathon, Texas, and Harrodsburg, Kentucky. No one would think of making a special trip for any of these experiences, but in the end they're the things that make a trip worthwhile.

—BENJAMIN AND
CHRISTINA SCHWARZ



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40	\$ 123	\$ 158	\$ 185	\$ 238	\$ 260
45	\$ 190	\$ 215	\$ 253	\$ 330	\$ 385
50	\$ 253	\$ 290	\$ 363	\$ 490	\$ 495
55	\$ 365	\$ 413	\$ 550	\$ 835	\$ 1,015
60	\$ 503	\$ 615	\$ 845	\$ 2,135	\$ 2,400
65	\$ 775	\$ 975	\$1,593	\$ 3,900	\$ 3,900
70	\$1,338	\$ 1,600	\$2,970	\$ 7,220	\$ 7,220
75	\$2,275	\$ 4,870	\$5,820	\$10,370	\$12,420

Male Premiums

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
35	\$ 123	\$ 138	\$ 165	\$ 223	\$ 253
40	\$ 148	\$ 183	\$ 225	\$ 288	\$ 335
45	\$ 225	\$ 300	\$ 360	\$ 450	\$ 513
50	\$ 338	\$ 455	\$ 525	\$ 743	\$ 828
55	\$ 500	\$ 670	\$ 768	\$ 1,640	\$ 2,330
60	\$ 783	\$ 990	\$1,335	\$ 3,630	\$ 3,630
65	\$1,330	\$ 1,650	\$2,693	\$ 5,250	\$ 5,250
70	\$2,473	\$ 3,175	\$4,860	\$ 8,790	\$ 8,790
75	\$4,400	\$ 7,443	\$9,600	\$13,260	\$15,030

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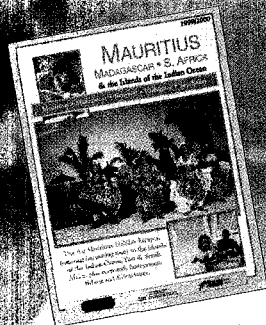
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The Goldilocks Strategy

“YOU can’t get a bad meal in Paris,” more than one person told me before my husband and I went to France together for the first time. Alas, within twenty-four hours of arrival we had proved those happy souls wrong. As I recall, throughout that trip we kept on redundantly proving them wrong, though I caught a cold and, I’ll admit, my gastronomic standards went to hell.

You *can* get wonderful food in Paris, of course, and I don’t mean just exorbitant haute cuisine. Before our next trip we made lists, we made reservations—we planned our meals as if we were Wellington preparing for Waterloo. We planned all except the first night, when we could count on being jet-lagged, out of sync, and out of sorts. Spontaneity, we supposed, would be the best plan.

We set out on foot as soon as we began to be hungry. It was a hot summer night. The first restaurant we came to was snug and cozy—no, thanks. The next was Vietnamese—all right, but not our idea of a welcome to Paris. The further possibilities were maybe a bit grotty, or insufficiently



French, or not pretty, or too expensive, or . . . We disdained one fancy place on the grounds that we’d be expected to sit up straight there, and we were tired. Never mind Wellington—now we were Goldilocks refusing to settle for a less than perfectly pleasing bowl of porridge.

We walked and walked. At last we came to a wide stone square, serene and gorgeous in the long, slanting light. People stood or lounged on a set of steps, awaiting the nightly opening of the Odéon, the architectural focus of the square. Across the way was a glass-fronted restaurant, La Méditerranée. We liked the setting, we liked the restaurant’s looks, we liked the posted menu: not too haughty, not too louche, but juuuust right.

Inside we discovered that a set of murals, the china, and the crisp linens had been designed by Jean Cocteau. We were shown to a spacious table with a view. The food was fine—not stunning, we didn’t require stunning, but fine. The service was hospitable, and no one seemed to mind when we soon slumped a bit in our chairs. The bill was reasonable enough. The only thing was, we had such a long walk back to our hotel.

—BARBARA WALLRAFF

There’s No Place Like It

I KNOW a place where a historic river—a good canoeing river—curls lazily within a mile-wide fen before passing alongside promontories called Rocky Narrows and King Philip’s Overlook. A blue heron stands around every bend. The town on the river’s eastern bank was founded the year Charles I lost his head, and a cellar hole in a forgotten copse marks the location of an early house, fortified against attack. The town is more crowded now, but large tracts of land have been put aside unspoiled, and grassy fields still stretch toward ridgeline windbreaks: you can walk around unbothered for hours, and yet remain close to food and drink and shops. A historical society is open for a few hours on weekends—its artifacts may be a little threadbare, but they include the keyboard on which “Joy to the World” was composed—and the surrounding area is dotted with specialty museums and small colleges that offer concerts and farms where you can pick your own. The general store doesn’t bill itself as such—but that’s what it is, and it has a counter for serving coffee and a crew of morning regulars who will turn in unison to observe an unfamiliar face.

There are inns and hotels and bed-and-breakfasts nearby, but I always stay at a little place that comes with a kitchen and a screen porch, and even the use of a car. Better yet, part of the monthly cost of my lodging turns out to be deductible for federal-tax purposes. I can no longer recall the sensation of first happening upon the locale where I make my home. Dropped here suddenly from Oahu or Osaka, I would surely write postcards about my lucky find. I value visitors from far away for the fresh eyes they bring. If only I could get them to do the lawn.

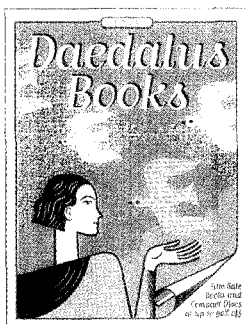
—CULLEN MURPHY

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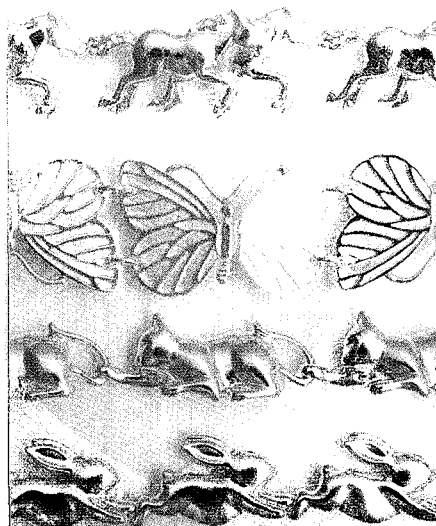


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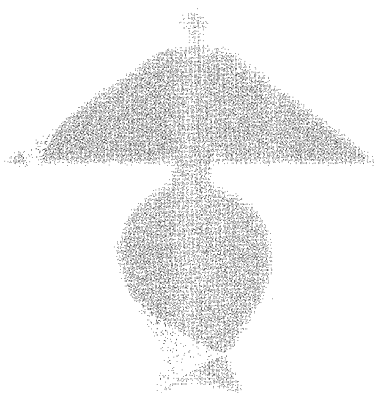
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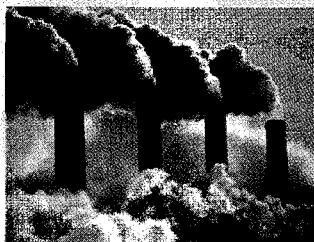
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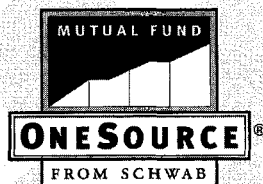
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Beyond the Information Revolution

by PETER F. DRUCKER



*The author uses history to gauge the significance of e-commerce—
“a totally unexpected development”—and to throw light on the future of
“the knowledge worker,” his own coinage*

THE truly revolutionary impact of the Information Revolution is just beginning to be felt. But it is not “information” that fuels this impact. It is not “artificial intelligence.” It is not the effect of computers and data processing on decision-making, policymaking, or strategy. It is something that practically no one foresaw or, indeed, even talked about ten or fifteen years ago: *e-commerce*—that is, the explosive emergence of the Internet as a major, perhaps eventually *the* major, worldwide distribution channel for goods, for services, and, surprisingly, for managerial and professional jobs. This is profoundly changing economies, markets, and industry structures; products and services and their flow; consumer segmentation, consumer values, and consumer behavior; jobs and labor markets. But the impact may be even greater on societies and politics and, above all, on the way we see the world and ourselves in it.

At the same time, new and unexpected industries will no doubt emerge, and fast. One is already here: biotechnology. And another: fish farming. Within the next fifty years fish farming may change us from hunters and gatherers on the seas into “marine pastoralists”—just as a similar innovation some 10,000 years ago changed our ancestors from hunters and gatherers on the land into agriculturists and pastoralists.

It is likely that other new technologies will appear suddenly, leading to major new industries. What they may be is im-

possible even to guess at. But it is highly probable—indeed, nearly certain—that they will emerge, and fairly soon. And it is nearly certain that few of them—and few industries based on them—will come out of computer and information technology. Like biotechnology and fish farming, each will emerge from its own unique and unexpected technology.

Of course, these are only predictions. But they are made on the assumption that the Information Revolution will evolve as several earlier technology-based “revolutions” have evolved over the past 500 years, since Gutenberg’s printing revolution, around 1455. In particular the assumption is that the Information Revolution will be like the Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. And that is indeed exactly how the Information Revolution has been during its first fifty years.

The Railroad

THE Information Revolution is now at the point at which the Industrial Revolution was in the early 1820s, about forty years after James Watt’s improved steam engine (first installed in 1776) was first applied, in 1785, to an industrial operation—the spinning of cotton. And the steam engine was to the first Industrial Revolution what the computer has been to the Information Revolution—its trigger, but

above all its symbol. Almost everybody today believes that nothing in economic history has ever moved as fast as, or had a greater impact than, the Information Revolution. But the Industrial Revolution moved at least as fast in the same time span, and had probably an equal impact if not a greater one. In short order it mechanized the great majority of manufacturing processes, beginning with the production of the most important industrial commodity of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: textiles. Moore's Law asserts that the price of the Information Revolution's basic element, the microchip, drops by 50 percent every eighteen months. The same was true of the products whose manufacture was mechanized by the first Industrial Revolution. The price of cotton textiles fell by 90 percent in the fifty years spanning the start of the eighteenth century. The production of cotton textiles increased at least 150-fold in Britain alone in the same period. And although textiles were the most visible product of its early

life as the cotton gin—soon steam-driven—created a huge demand for low-cost labor and made breeding slaves America's most profitable industry for some decades.

The Industrial Revolution also had a great impact on the family. The nuclear family had long been the unit of production. On the farm and in the artisan's workshop husband, wife, and children worked together. The factory, almost for the first time in history, took worker and work out of the home and moved them into the workplace, leaving family members behind—whether spouses of adult factory workers or, especially in the early stages, parents of child factory workers.

Indeed, the "crisis of the family" did not begin after the Second World War. It began with the Industrial Revolution—and was in fact a stock concern of those who opposed the Industrial Revolution and the factory system. (The best description of the divorce of work and family, and of its effect on both, is probably Charles Dickens's 1854 novel *Hard Times*.)

But despite all these effects, the Industrial Revolution in its first half century only mechanized the production of goods that had been in existence all along. It tremendously increased output and tremendously decreased cost. It created both consumers and consumer products. But the products themselves had been around all along. And products made in the new fac-

IN THE NEW MENTAL GEOGRAPHY CRE-

ATED BY THE RAILROAD, HUMANITY

MASTERED DISTANCE. IN THE MENTAL

GEOGRAPHY OF E-COMMERCE, DISTANCE HAS BEEN ELIMINATED. THERE IS ONLY

years, the Industrial Revolution mechanized the production of practically all other major goods, such as paper, glass, leather, and bricks. Its impact was by no means confined to consumer goods. The production of iron and ironware—for example, wire—became mechanized and steam-driven as fast as did that of textiles, with the same effects on cost, price, and output. By the end of the Napoleonic Wars the making of guns was steam-driven throughout Europe; cannons were made ten to twenty times as fast as before, and their cost dropped by more than two thirds. By that time Eli Whitney had similarly mechanized the manufacture of muskets in America and had created the first mass-production industry.

These forty or fifty years gave rise to the factory and the "working class." Both were still so few in number in the mid-1820s, even in England, as to be statistically insignificant. But psychologically they had come to dominate (and soon would politically also). Before there were factories in America, Alexander Hamilton foresaw an industrialized country in his 1791 *Report on Manufactures*. A decade later, in 1803, a French economist, Jean-Baptiste Say, saw that the Industrial Revolution had changed economics by creating the "entrepreneur."

The social consequences went far beyond factory and working class. As the historian Paul Johnson has pointed out, in *A History of the American People* (1997), it was the explosive growth of the steam-engine-based textile industry that revived slavery. Considered to be practically dead by the Founders of the American Republic, slavery roared back to

ONE ECONOMY AND ONLY ONE MARKET.

THE COMPETITION IS NOT LOCAL ANY-

MORE—IT KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES.

tories differed from traditional products only in that they were uniform, with fewer defects than existed in products made by any but the top craftsmen of earlier periods.

There was only one important exception, one new product, in those first fifty years: the steamboat, first made practical by Robert Fulton in 1807. It had little impact until thirty or forty years later. In fact, until almost the end of the nineteenth century more freight was carried on the world's oceans by sailing vessels than by steamships.

Then, in 1829, came the railroad, a product truly without precedent, and it forever changed economy, society, and politics.

In retrospect it is difficult to imagine why the invention of the railroad took so long. Rails to move carts had been around in coal mines for a very long time. What could be more obvious than to put a steam engine on a cart to drive it, rather than have it pushed by people or pulled by horses? But the railroad did not emerge from the cart in the mines. It was developed quite independently. And it was not intended to carry freight. On the contrary, for a long time it was seen only as a way to carry people. Railroads became freight carriers thirty years later, in America. (In fact, as late as the 1870s and 1880s the

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British engineers who were hired to build the railroads of newly Westernized Japan designed them to carry passengers—and to this day Japanese railroads are not equipped to carry freight.) But until the first railroad actually began to operate, it was virtually unanticipated.

Within five years, however, the Western world was engulfed by the biggest boom history had ever seen—the railroad boom. Punctuated by the most spectacular busts in economic history, the boom continued in Europe for thirty years, until the late 1850s, by which time most of today's major railroads had been built. In the United States it continued for another thirty years, and in outlying areas—Argentina, Brazil, Asian Russia, China—until the First World War.

The railroad was the truly revolutionary element of the Industrial Revolution, for not only did it create a new economic dimension but also it rapidly changed what I would call the *mental geography*. For the first time in history human beings had true mobility. For the first time the horizons of ordinary people expanded. Contemporaries immediately realized that a fundamental change in mentality had occurred. (A good account of this can be found in what is surely the best portrayal of the Industrial Revolution's society in transition, George Eliot's 1871 novel *Middlemarch*.) As the great French historian Fernand Braudel pointed out in his last major work, *The Identity of France* (1986), it was the railroad that made France into one nation and one culture. It had previously been a congeries of self-contained regions, held together only politically. And the role of the railroad in creating the American West is, of course, a commonplace in U.S. history.

Routinization

LIKE the Industrial Revolution two centuries ago, the Information Revolution so far—that is, since the first computers, in the mid-1940s—has only transformed processes that were here all along. In fact, the real impact of the Information Revolution has not been in the form of “information” at all. Almost none of the effects of information envisaged forty years ago have actually happened. For instance, there has been practically no change in the way major decisions are made in business or government. But the Information Revolution has routinized traditional *processes* in an untold number of areas.

The software for tuning a piano converts a process that traditionally took three hours into one that takes twenty minutes. There is software for payrolls, for inventory control, for delivery schedules, and for all the other routine processes of a business. Drawing the inside arrangements of a major building (heating, water supply, sewerage, and so on) such as a prison or a hospital formerly took, say, twenty-five highly skilled draftsmen up to fifty days; now there is a program that enables one draftsman to do the job in a couple of days, at a tiny fraction of the cost. There is software to help people do their tax returns and software that teaches hospital residents how to

take out a gall bladder. The people who now speculate in the stock market online do exactly what their predecessors in the 1920s did while spending hours each day in a brokerage office. The processes have not been changed at all. They have been routinized, step by step, with a tremendous saving in time and, often, in cost.

The psychological impact of the Information Revolution, like that of the Industrial Revolution, has been enormous. It has perhaps been greatest on the way in which young children learn. Beginning at age four (and often earlier), children now rapidly develop computer skills, soon surpassing their elders; computers are their toys and their learning tools. Fifty years hence we may well conclude that there was no “crisis of American education” in the closing years of the twentieth century—there was only a growing incongruence between the way twentieth-century schools taught and the way late-twentieth-century children learned. Something similar happened in the sixteenth-century university, a hundred years after the invention of the printing press and movable type.

But as to the way we work, the Information Revolution has so far simply routinized what was done all along. The only exception is the CD-ROM, invented around twenty years ago to present operas, university courses, a writer's oeuvre, in an entirely new way. Like the steamboat, the CD-ROM has not immediately caught on.

The Meaning of E-commerce

E-COMMERCE is to the Information Revolution what the railroad was to the Industrial Revolution—a totally new, totally unprecedented, totally unexpected development. And like the railroad 170 years ago, e-commerce is creating a new and distinct boom, rapidly changing the economy, society, and politics.

One example: A mid-sized company in America's industrial Midwest, founded in the 1920s and now run by the grandchildren of the founder, used to have some 60 percent of the market in inexpensive dinnerware for fast-food eateries, school and office cafeterias, and hospitals within a hundred-mile radius of its factory. China is heavy and breaks easily, so cheap china is traditionally sold within a small area. Almost overnight this company lost more than half of its market. One of its customers, a hospital cafeteria where someone went “surfing” on the Internet, discovered a European manufacturer that offered china of apparently better quality at a lower price and shipped cheaply by air. Within a few months the main customers in the area shifted to the European supplier. Few of them, it seems, realize—let alone care—that the stuff comes from Europe.

In the new mental geography created by the railroad, humanity mastered distance. In the mental geography of e-commerce, distance has been eliminated. There is only one economy and only one market.

One consequence of this is that every business must become globally competitive, even if it manufactures or sells only within a local or regional market. The competition is not local anymore—in fact, it knows no boundaries. Every company has to become transnational in the way it is run. Yet the traditional multinational may well become obsolete. It manufactures and distributes in a number of distinct geographies, in which it is a *local* company. But in e-commerce there are neither local companies nor distinct geographies. Where to man-

clear that the shift to e-commerce will be just as eclectic and unexpected.

Here are a few examples. Twenty-five years ago it was generally believed that within a few decades the printed word would be dispatched electronically to individual subscribers' computer screens. Subscribers would then either read text on their computer screens or download it and print it out. This was the assumption that underlay the CD-ROM. Thus any number of newspapers and magazines, by no means only in



ufacture, where to sell, and how to sell will remain important business decisions. But in another twenty years they may no longer determine what a company does, how it does it, and where it does it.

At the same time, it is not yet clear what kinds of goods and services will be bought and sold through e-commerce and what kinds will turn out to be unsuitable for it. This has been true whenever a new distribution channel has arisen. Why, for instance, did the railroad change both the mental and the economic geography of the West, whereas the steamboat—with its equal impact on world trade and passenger traffic—did neither? Why was there no “steamboat boom”?

Equally unclear has been the impact of more-recent changes in distribution channels—in the shift, for instance, from the local grocery store to the supermarket, from the individual supermarket to the supermarket chain, and from the supermarket chain to Wal-Mart and other discount chains. It is already

the United States, established themselves online; few, so far, have become gold mines. But anyone who twenty years ago predicted the business of Amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com—that is, that books would be sold on the Internet but delivered in their heavy, printed form—would have been laughed off the podium. Yet Amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com are in exactly that business, and they are in it worldwide. The first order for the U.S. edition of my most recent book, *Management Challenges for the 21st Century* (1999), came to Amazon.com, and it came from Argentina.

Another example: Ten years ago one of the world's leading automobile companies made a thorough study of the expected impact on automobile sales of the then emerging Internet. It concluded that the Internet would become a major distribution channel for used cars, but that customers would still want to see new cars, to touch them, to test-drive them. In actuality, at least so far, most used cars are still being bought not over the

Internet but in a dealer's lot. However, as many as half of all new cars sold (excluding luxury cars) may now actually be "bought" over the Internet. Dealers only deliver cars that customers have chosen well before they enter the dealership. What does this mean for the future of the local automobile dealership, the twentieth century's most profitable small business?

Another example: Traders in the American stock-market boom of 1998 and 1999 increasingly buy and sell online. But investors seem to be shifting away from buying electronically. The major U.S. investment vehicle is mutual funds. And whereas almost half of all mutual funds a few years ago were

bought electronically, it is estimated that the figure will drop to 35 percent next year and to 20 percent by 2005. This is the opposite of what "everybody expected" ten or fifteen years ago.

The fastest-growing e-commerce in the United States is in an area where there was no "commerce" until now—in jobs for professionals and managers. Almost half of the world's largest companies now recruit through Web sites, and some two and a half million managerial and professional people (two thirds of them not even engineers or computer professionals) have their résumés on the Internet and solicit job offers over it. The result is a completely new labor market.

This illustrates another important effect of e-commerce. New distribution channels change who the customers are. They change not only *how* customers buy but also *what* they buy. They change consumer behavior, savings patterns, industry structure—in short, the entire economy. This is what is now happening, and not only in the United States but increasingly in the rest of the developed world, and in a good many emerging countries, including mainland China.

THE NET

(Long Island Sound, 1960)

I saw the black maid park the Cadillac
in the lot of the Indian Harbor Yacht Club.
When she hefted the first huge silver tray
of delicacies for that evening's soiree
on her boss's yacht, I offered help.

No, she said, in her starched gray uniform
on orders from her employer. The launch man,
in wrinkled khakis and a black cap with gold
braided on the bill, told her no, she couldn't
ride the launch. Against Club rules.

But I am just bringing out the food, she said.
Everyone looked at the ground. The launch man
and the maid in their uniforms with strict orders,
me, at twelve, with my marlinspike and stopwatch,
still learning the lines, the tactics of yachting.

I'd never been so close to a black person.
I could see the whites of her eyes flash.
She was caught. He was caught. I
didn't know that I'd been caught. I couldn't
feel the hook that pinned my tongue to my cheek.

But stepping aboard the launch, I felt the net,
woven so carefully by so many hands,
the seamless, almost miraculously strong,
transparent canopy that keeps everyone
in Greenwich exquisitely and forever in place.

—PETER HARRIS

Luther, Machiavelli, and the Salmon

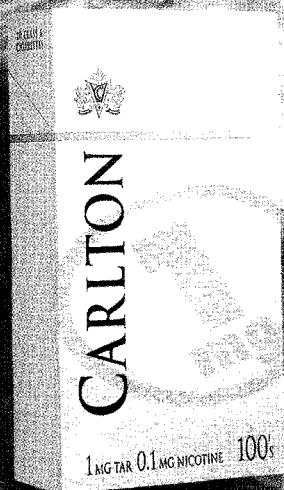
THE railroad made the Industrial Revolution accomplished fact. What had been revolution became establishment. And the boom it triggered lasted almost a hundred years. The technology of the steam engine did not end with the railroad. It led in the 1880s and 1890s to the steam turbine, and in the 1920s and 1930s to the last magnificent American steam locomotives, so beloved by railroad buffs. But the technology centered on the steam engine and in manufacturing operations ceased to be central. Instead the dynamics of the technology shifted to totally new industries that emerged almost immediately after the railroad was invented, not one of which had anything to do with steam or steam engines. The electric telegraph and photography were first, in the 1830s, followed soon thereafter by optics and farm equipment. The new and different fertilizer industry, which began in the late 1830s, in short order transformed agriculture. Public health became a major and central growth industry, with quarantine, vaccination, the supply of pure water, and sewers, which for the first time in history made the city a more healthful habitat than the countryside. At the same time came the first anesthetics.

With these major new technologies came major new social institutions: the modern postal service, the daily paper, investment banking, and commercial banking, to name just a few. Not one of them had much to do with the steam engine or with the technology of the Industrial Revolution in general. It was these new industries and institutions that by 1850 had come to dominate the industrial and economic landscape of the developed countries.

This is very similar to what happened in the printing revolution—the first of the technological revolutions that created the

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modern world. In the fifty years after 1455, when Gutenberg had perfected the printing press and movable type he had been working on for years, the printing revolution swept Europe and completely changed its economy and its psychology. But the books printed during the first fifty years, the ones called incunabula, contained largely the same texts that monks, in their scriptoria, had for centuries laboriously copied by hand: religious tracts and whatever remained of the writings of antiquity. Some 7,000 titles were published in those first fifty years, in 35,000 editions. At least 6,700 of these were traditional titles. In other words, in its first fifty years printing made available—and increasingly cheap—traditional information and communication products. But then, some sixty years after Gutenberg, came Luther's German Bible—thousands and thousands of copies sold almost immediately at an unbelievably low price. With Luther's Bible the new printing technology ushered in a new society. It ushered in Protestantism, which conquered half of Europe and, within another twenty years, forced the Catholic Church to reform itself in the other half. Luther used the new medium of print deliberately to restore religion to the center of individual life and of society. And this unleashed a century and a half of religious reform, religious revolt, religious wars.

At the very same time, however, that Luther used print with the avowed intention of restoring Christianity, Machiavelli wrote and published *The Prince* (1513), the first Western book in more than a thousand years that contained not one biblical quotation and no reference to the writers of antiquity. In no time at all *The Prince* became the "other best seller" of the sixteenth century, and its most notorious but also most influential book. In short order there was a wealth of purely secular works, what we today call literature: novels and books in science, history, politics, and, soon, economics. It was not long before the first purely secular art form arose, in England—the modern theater. Brand-new social institutions also arose: the Jesuit order, the Spanish infantry, the first modern navy, and, finally, the sovereign national state. In other words, the printing revolution followed the same trajectory as did the Industrial Revolution, which began 300 years later, and as does the Information Revolution today.

What the new industries and institutions will be, no one can say yet. No one in the 1520s anticipated secular literature, let alone the secular theater. No one in the 1820s anticipated the electric telegraph, or public health, or photography.

The one thing (to say it again) that is highly probable, if not nearly certain, is that the next twenty years will see the emergence of a number of new industries. At the same time, it is nearly certain that few of them will come out of information technology, the computer, data processing, or the Internet. This is indicated by all historical precedents. But it is true also of the new industries that are already rapidly emerging. Biotechnology, as mentioned, is already here. So is fish farming.

Twenty-five years ago salmon was a delicacy. The typical convention dinner gave a choice between chicken and beef.

Today salmon is a commodity, and is the other choice on the convention menu. Most salmon today is not caught at sea or in a river but grown on a fish farm. The same is increasingly true of trout. Soon, apparently, it will be true of a number of other fish. Flounder, for instance, which is to seafood what pork is to meat, is just going into oceanic mass production. This will no doubt lead to the genetic development of new and different fish, just as the domestication of sheep, cows, and chickens led to the development of new breeds among them.

But probably a dozen or so technologies are at the stage where biotechnology was twenty-five years ago—that is, ready to emerge.

There is also a *service* waiting to be born: insurance against the risks of foreign-exchange exposure. Now that every business is part of the global economy, such insurance is as badly needed as was insurance against physical risks (fire, flood) in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, when traditional insurance emerged. All the knowledge needed for foreign-exchange insurance is available; only the institution itself is still lacking.

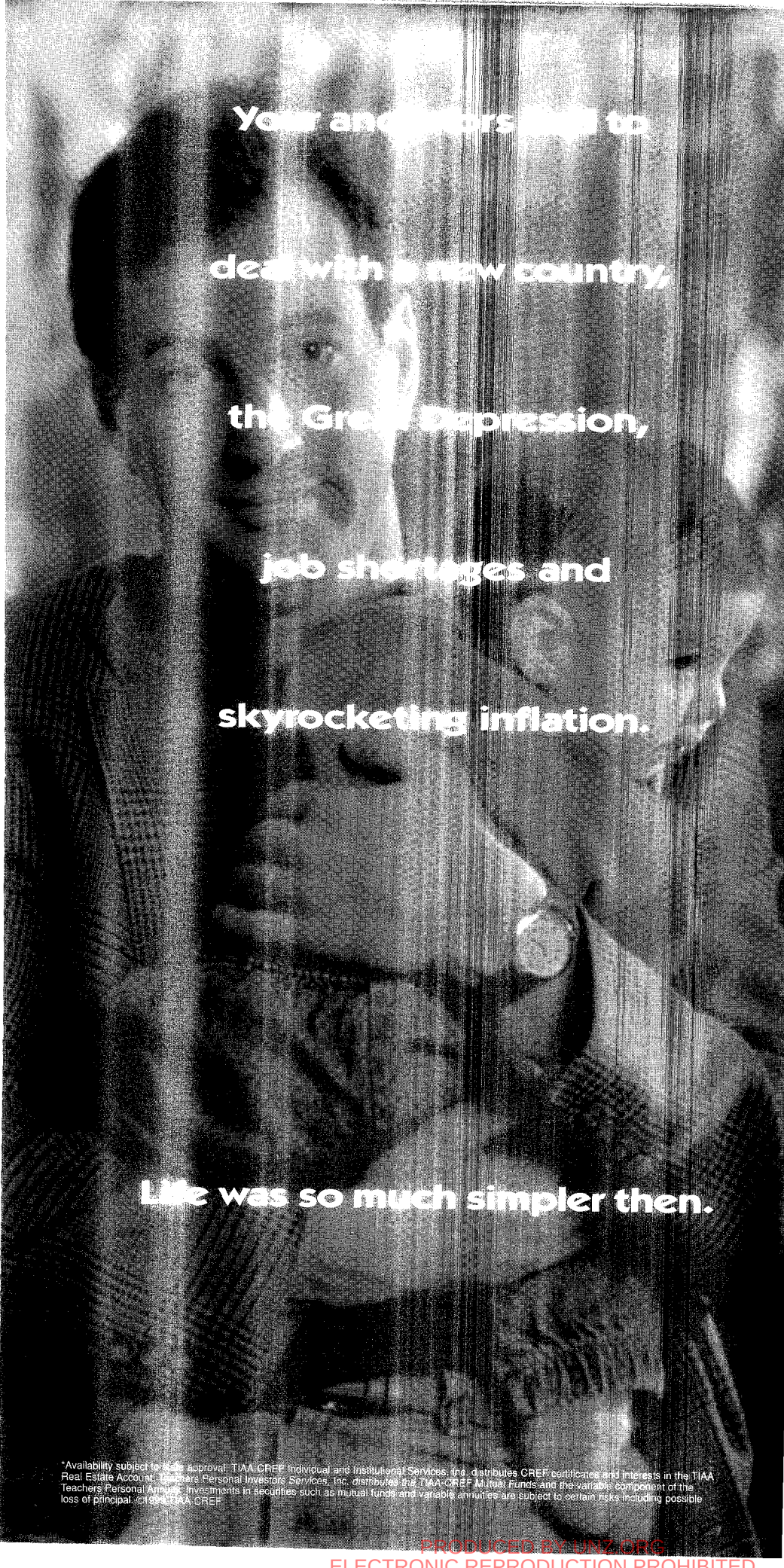
The next two or three decades are likely to see even greater technological change than has occurred in the decades since the emergence of the computer, and also even greater change in industry structures, in the economic landscape, and probably in the social landscape as well.

The Gentleman Versus the Technologist

THE new industries that emerged after the railroad owed little technologically to the steam engine or to the Industrial Revolution in general. They were not its "children after the flesh"—but they were its "children after the spirit." They were possible only because of the mind-set that the Industrial Revolution had created and the skills it had developed. This was a mind-set that accepted—indeed, eagerly welcomed—invention and innovation. It was a mind-set that accepted, and eagerly welcomed, new products and new services.

It also created the social values that made possible the new industries. Above all, it created the "technologist." Social and financial success long eluded the first major American technologist, Eli Whitney, whose cotton gin, in 1793, was as central to the triumph of the Industrial Revolution as was the steam engine. But a generation later the technologist—still self-taught—had become the American folk hero and was both socially accepted and financially rewarded. Samuel Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, may have been the first example; Thomas Edison became the most prominent. In Europe the "businessman" long remained a social inferior, but the university-trained engineer had by 1830 or 1840 become a respected "professional."

By the 1850s England was losing its predominance and beginning to be overtaken as an industrial economy, first by the United States and then by Germany. It is generally accepted



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that neither economics nor technology was the major reason. The main cause was social. Economically, and especially financially, England remained the great power until the First World War. Technologically it held its own throughout the nineteenth century. Synthetic dyestuffs, the first products of the modern chemical industry, were invented in England, and so was the steam turbine. But England did not accept the technologist socially. He never became a "gentleman." The English built first-rate engineering schools in India but almost none at home. No other country so honored the "scientist"—and, indeed, Britain retained leadership in physics throughout the nineteenth century, from James Clerk Maxwell and Michael Faraday all the way to Ernest Rutherford. But the technologist remained a "tradesman." (Dickens, for instance, showed open contempt for the upstart ironmaster in his 1853 novel *Bleak House*.)

Nor did England develop the venture capitalist, who has the

NEW KNOWLEDGE-BASED INDUSTRIES

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means and the mentality to finance the unexpected and unproved. A French invention, first portrayed in Balzac's monumental *La Comédie humaine*, in the 1840s, the venture capitalist was institutionalized in the United States by J. P. Morgan and, simultaneously, in Germany and Japan by the universal bank. But England, although it invented and developed the commercial bank to finance trade, had no institution to finance industry until two German refugees, S. G. Warburg and Henry Grunfeld, started an entrepreneurial bank in London, just before the Second World War.

Bribing the Knowledge Worker

WHAT might be needed to prevent the United States from becoming the England of the twenty-first century? I am convinced that a drastic change in the social mind-set is required—just as leadership in the industrial economy after the railroad required the drastic change from "tradesman" to "technologist" or "engineer."

What we call the Information Revolution is actually a Knowledge Revolution. What has made it possible to routinize processes is not machinery; the computer is only the trigger. Software is the reorganization of traditional work, based on centuries of experience, through the application of knowledge and especially of systematic, logical analysis. The key is not electronics; it is cognitive science. This means that

the key to maintaining leadership in the economy and the technology that are about to emerge is likely to be the social position of knowledge professionals and social acceptance of their values. For them to remain traditional "employees" and be treated as such would be tantamount to England's treating its technologists as tradesmen—and likely to have similar consequences.

Today, however, we are trying to straddle the fence—to maintain the traditional mind-set, in which capital is the key resource and the financier is the boss, while bribing knowledge workers to be content to remain employees by giving them bonuses and stock options. But this, if it can work at all, can work only as long as the emerging industries enjoy a stock-market boom, as the Internet companies have been doing. The next major industries are likely to behave far more like traditional industries—that is, to grow slowly, painfully, laboriously.

The early industries of the Industrial Revolution—cotton textiles, iron, the railroads—were boom industries that created millionaires overnight, like Balzac's venture bankers and like Dickens's ironmaster, who in a few years grew from a lowly domestic servant into a "captain of industry." The industries that emerged after 1830 also created millionaires. But they

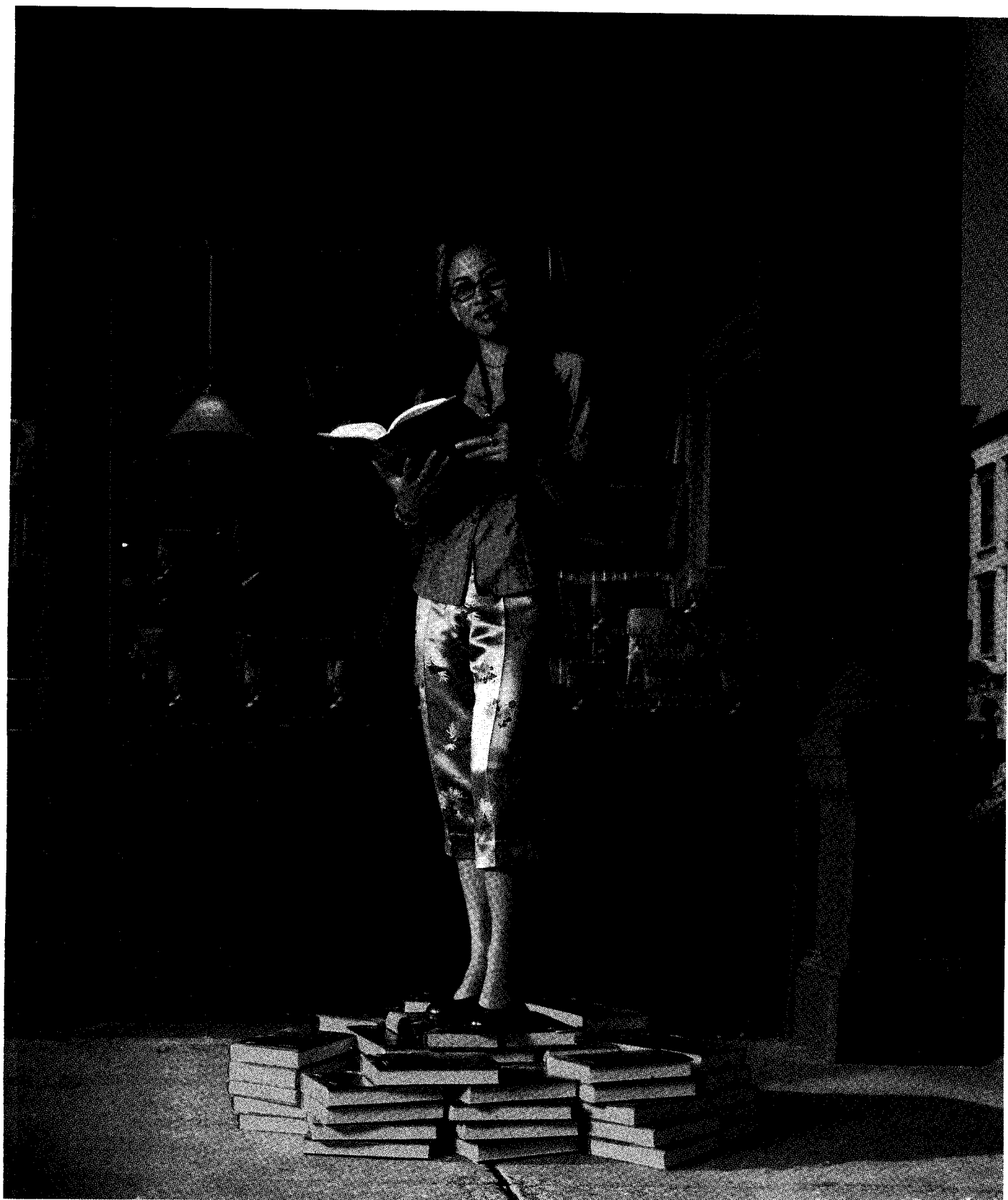
WORKERS' GREED, IT WILL HAVE TO

BE DONE BY GIVING THEM SOCIAL

RECOGNITION AND SOCIAL POWER.

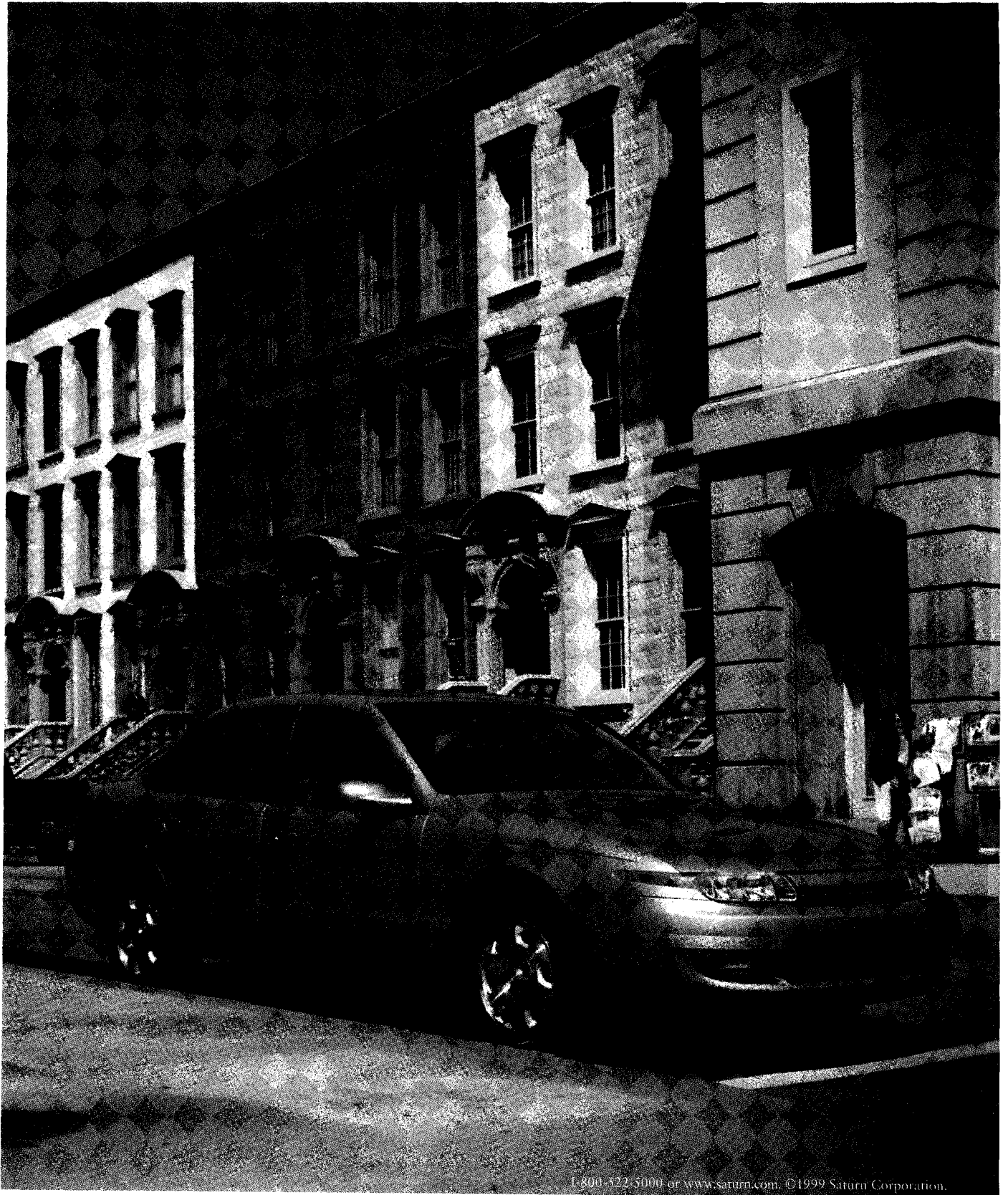
took twenty years to do so, and it was twenty years of hard work, of struggle, of disappointments and failures, of thrift. This is likely to be true of the industries that will emerge from now on. It is already true of biotechnology.

Bribing the knowledge workers on whom these industries depend will therefore simply not work. The key knowledge workers in these businesses will surely continue to expect to share financially in the fruits of their labor. But the financial fruits are likely to take much longer to ripen, if they ripen at all. And then, probably within ten years or so, running a business with (short-term) "shareholder value" as its first—if not its only—goal and justification will have become counterproductive. Increasingly, performance in these new knowledge-based industries will come to depend on running the institution so as to attract, hold, and motivate knowledge workers. When this can no longer be done by satisfying knowledge workers' greed, as we are now trying to do, it will have to be done by satisfying their values, and by giving them social recognition and social power. It will have to be done by turning them from subordinates into fellow executives, and from employees, however well paid, into partners. ☛



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Poetry and American Memory

by ROBERT PINSKY

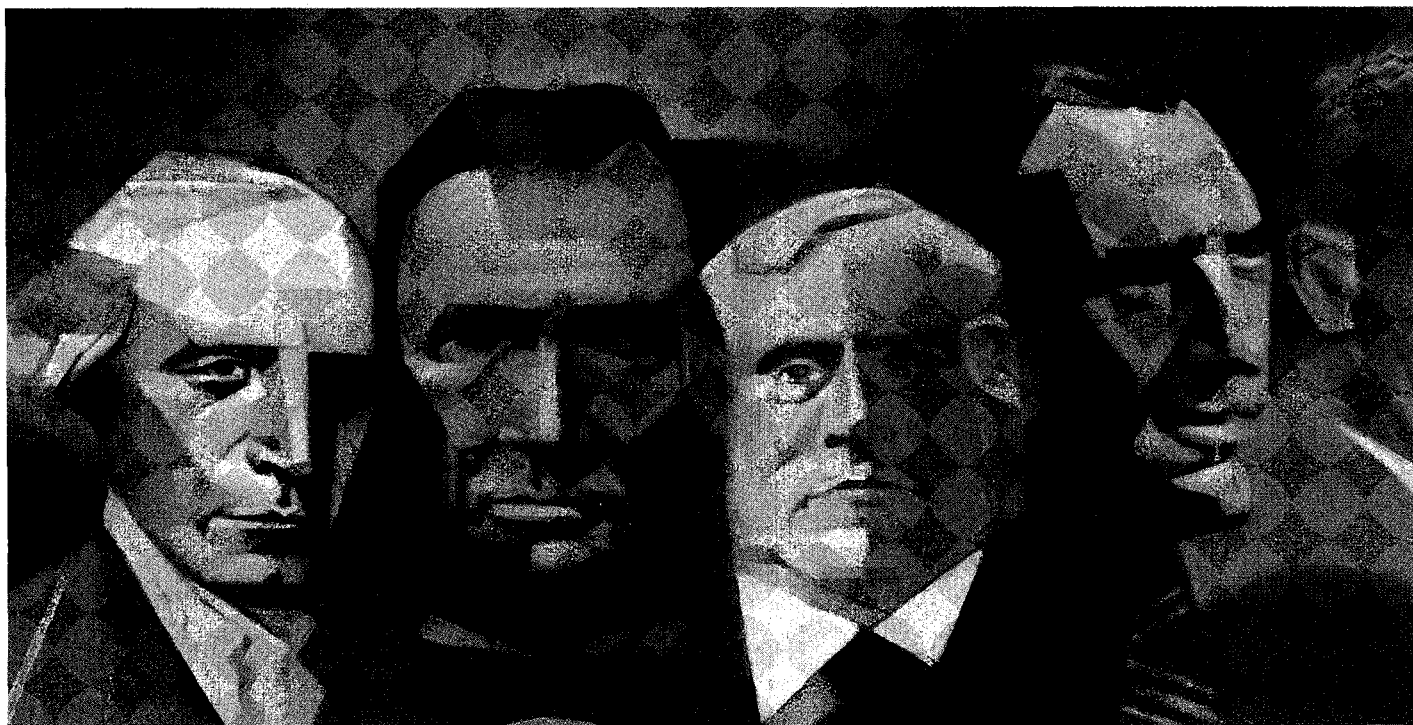
The poet laureate reflects on what makes the American people “a people”—and what our poetry can teach us about the “fragile, heroic enterprise of remembering”

WHO do we Americans think we are? This is a cultural question, and it is worth asking: many of the great issues in American public life are ultimately cultural issues. The relation of the well-off to the poor; the meaning and the future of race and ethnicity; the degree to and manner in which we share responsibility for the aged, the sick, the needy; even our mission and place among the world's nations: all these depend on our sense of ourselves as a people—that is, as a cultural reality. In other words, these social issues depend on how we remember ourselves.

Though the United States assuredly is a great nation, the question remains open whether we are a great people or are still engaged in the undertaking of becoming a great people. A

people is defined and unified not by blood but by shared memory. That fact is possibly clearer in our land than in one where people tend to look more like one another than we do. My purpose in this essay is a kind of experiment in memory: to seek a vision of our future in the poetry of our past, finding some examples of American poetry's relation to the evolution of American memory.

Part of our peculiar claim to greatness as a nation rests on the fact that we have done without many elements that might be thought of as the marks of a great people, among them a myth of origin. Americans have been suckled by no wolf, sired by no Trojan fleeing Troy; they are not descended from the sun or from dragon's teeth sown in the earth, not chosen by a



PHILIP FRENEAU, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, PHILLIPS BROOKS, WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS,

god or descended from Olympian trysts with mortal maidens, not descended from any totem animal or enchanted soil or ancient race. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, passionately determined that the young American nation develop a distinct culture for its people, wrote "Paul Revere's Ride" in a conscious effort to supply such a myth—and with some success: I can testify that many Americans, including Senator Edward Kennedy, have much of the poem by heart.

Memory need not be mythical, of course. Our founding by intellectually inclined planters and merchants gave us great national documents. The question about those documents—or about our defense of democracy in the Second World War or our jazz or our feature films or our technology—is How are they related to people, or to us as a people? How do we remember the accomplishments of our nation? What is American memory?

In many countries, certainly in Europe, shared national memory has a reality in the naming of public squares and boulevards by dates. The equivalent for us would be if the Fourth of July were one term in a vocabulary of dates with civic emotional meaning, rather than unique. (There are not likely to be boulevards named for December 7 or November 22.) In such countries the name of a month—August, October, July—can have tremendous political and emotional resonance. It is hard to think of an American poem with a title parallel to William Butler Yeats's "Easter 1916." The closest I can come is "Days of 1964," by James Merrill, arguably the most European of our recent poets. In fact Merrill's title is an allusion to the Greek poet C. P. Cavafy.

When those planters and merchants, formerly loyal to the British monarchy, founded a nation, its people were even then

various in origin. The nation developed with a relative scarcity of unifying folk culture—a single web of rhymes, songs, peasant tales, and superstitions passed down by grandparents. What we lacked in unity of that kind we made up for with richness and variety. The nation thrived amid that variety, and it thrived also in the absence of a monolithic cultural elite: no royal court in the capital city—and, indeed, no capital city that was also the capital of finance or glamour, of learning or technology. Instead different cities, from coast to coast, vied and continue to vie for those distinctions. No social group has quite succeeded in establishing itself as the unifying central inheritor of fine art or music. The American families that aspire to such a role often fade into the foundations or endowments that bear their names.

The racial division inherited from slavery is the largest and most egregious embodiment of a more general fact about us: that we continue to improvise our nature as a single people. Thus it is not only in the imaginations of great African-American creators such as Duke Ellington and W.E.B. DuBois but also in magnetic artifacts such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Gone With the Wind* that the cultural inventions "black" and "white" become a great, central metonymy for a larger national undertaking—the project of making ourselves.

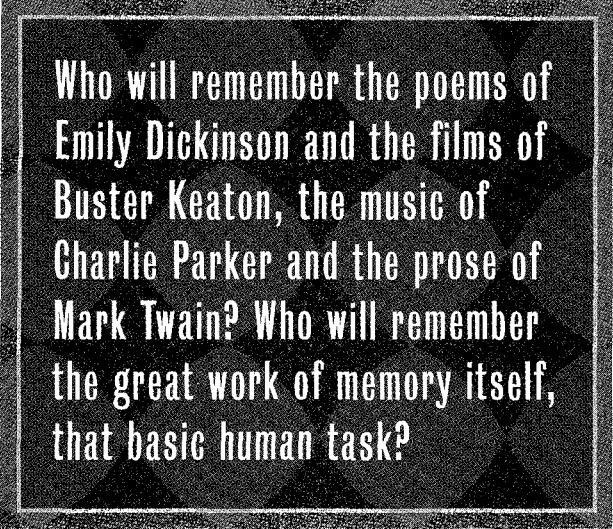
A contrast may illuminate what I mean by American memory. In a fascinating 1998 essay, "Einstein and the Cultural Roots of Modern Science," Gerald Holton, a professor of physics who writes on the history of science, describes the significant social class of *Bildungsbürgertum*—that portion of the bourgeoisie whose capital consisted of their education. The political and economic realms were feeble, so social power derived largely from the cultural realm. This seems to me the opposite of the



STERLING BROWN, ELIZABETH BISHOP, ROBERT FROST, ROBERT HAYDEN, FRANK BIDART

American situation, not because we have no catalogue of thinkers, artists, and scientists equivalent to a European roster—of course we have—but because the memory of their accomplishments has not been the source of our unity.

The greatness of our nation, then, may consist partly in its ability to thrive, to endure, and to evolve without certain marks of peoplehood. Indeed, a major, traditional American proposition has been that our greatness consists precisely in the fact that we are making it up as we go along—that we



Who will remember the poems of
Emily Dickinson and the films of
Buster Keaton, the music of
Charlie Parker and the prose of
Mark Twain? Who will remember
the great work of memory itself,
that basic human task?

are perpetually in the process of devising ourselves as a people. An improvised, eclectic, synthesizing quality pervades our cultural products. This quality seems unmistakable in both the most glorious and the stupidest of our cultural manifestations—in the transcendent music of Charlie Parker and in the embarrassing dumbness of Super Bowl half-time shows. The improvisational, provisional spirit is in the poems of Wallace Stevens and in the denim pants of Levi Strauss.

To recognize such continuities should be to acknowledge that the alleged absence of memory is an illusion: cultural artifacts, high or low, successful or failed, shining or dismal, draw on recollection. The supposed American lack of historical sense is itself in part a national myth or delusion: the nobility of Parker's music and the half-time jumble are both acts of memory, as all cultural deeds must be.

Of course, the matter of degree varies: often, strength of memory is what gives works of art and political discourse alike the virtues of depth and reality. For example, in the great decades of American feature films, screenplays were written by writers who had set out to be poets, novelists, playwrights; their work drew on many centuries of cultural history and possibility. Even as purely cinematic a genius as Preston Sturges wrote first for the stage. Many unsatisfying contemporary screenplays, on the other hand, are written by people whose ambition has always been to write screenplays. These scripts draw for memory only on other movies, shortening the available span of undertone and overtone to decades, as opposed to

centuries. To me, one reason that Francis Ford Coppola's *Godfather* movies seem like great works is their persuasive imagining of the Sicilian and immigrant past, a historically layered underpinning. In contrast, Steven Spielberg's films *Schindler's List* and *Saving Private Ryan* are impressive for their spectacle—the rousting of the Kraków ghetto, the Normandy landing—but thin and perfunctory in their historical understanding. What *Schindler* says about the Jews he might have saved and what *Private Ryan* says about his decision to stay with his comrades lack flesh. Re-creation is not memory but spectacle—and spectacle may stand for the body of the past but not its soul.

I'd like to present some poems that suggest a characteristically American form of memory, memory concentrated on certain themes: the fragility of community, the mystery of isolation, and a peculiar elegiac quality that is almost self-contradictory in its yearning toward a past that in one way seems forgotten and sealed off, yet in another way is determinant, powerfully haunting the present. Perhaps as a corollary to that double sense of the past, another aspect of the poems I have in mind is the defeat of reason—even the threat or presence of insanity.

Abraham Lincoln's evocative though amateur poem "My Childhood-Home I See Again" is explicitly grounded in memory. The poem exhibits all the preoccupations I have suggested, especially a terrified fascination with madness. It begins with conventional nostalgia.

My childhood-home I see again,
And gladden with the view;
And still as mem'ries crowd my brain,
There's sadness in it too.
O memory! thou mid-way world
'Twixt Earth and Paradise,
Where things decayed, and loved ones lost
In dreamy shadows rise.

In the poem Lincoln has returned after twenty years of absence to find everything he knew changed, in particular the people. His genius as a prose writer emerges in the directness of language here.

Young childhood grown, strong manhood grey,
And half of all are dead. . . .
Till every sound appears a knell,
and every spot a grave.

Though the language gets tighter, the vague elegiac sentiment through the first third or so of the poem remains ordinary. Then a specific character is recalled, a figure through whom the poem enters unsettling, mysterious territory.

And here's an object of more dread,
Than ought the grave contains—
A human-form, with reason fled,
While wretched life remains.

Poor Matthew! Once of genius bright,—
A fortune-favored child—
Now locked for aye, in mental night,
A haggard mad-man wild.

The bizarre, harsh nature of the narrative comes through Lincoln's somewhat wooden verses, with plenty of emotional effect.

Poor Matthew! I have ne'er forgot
When first with maddened will,
Yourself you maimed, your father fought,
And mother strove to kill;
And terror spread, and neighbours ran,
Your dang'rous strength to bind;
And soon a howling crazy man,
Your limbs were fast confined.

One ingredient in the horror here is that this is a communal matter: the neighbors, in what I take to be frontier Indiana or Illinois, not some impersonal authority or government, must run to cope with the uncanny violence. The madman's loss of reason reflects the terror of a loss of order or community in the fragile, tentative little society itself.

How then you writhed, and shrieked aloud,
Your bones and sinews bared;
And fiendish on the gaping crowd,
With burning eye-balls glared.
And begged, and swore, and wept, and prayed,
With maniac laughter joined—
How fearful are the signs displayed,
By pangs that kill the mind!

This violent, unhappy memory, perhaps traumatic for the rural community and pretty clearly so for the poet, is succeeded by a different memory of Matthew, in some ways sweeter, in other ways even more disturbing. In an act of memory reminiscent of Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper," but more stressful and charged, Lincoln recalls the insane man, incarcerated, singing at night.

And when at length, tho' drear and long,
Time soothed your fiercer woes—
How plaintively your mournful song,
Upon the still night rose.
I've heard it oft, as if I dreamed,
Far-distant, sweet, and lone;
The funeral dirge it ever seemed
Of reason dead and gone.

This is a powerful attraction and a powerful ambivalence. The funeral dirge of reason dead and gone may be a frightening idea, but the dirge of that isolated figure also has a strange magnetism for Lincoln, who goes off from the community to hear it in solitude.

To drink its strains, I've stole away,
All silently and still,
Ere yet the rising god of day
Had streaked the Eastern hill.
Air held his breath; the trees all still
Seem'd sorr'wing angels round.
Their swelling tears in dew-drops fell
Upon the list'ning ground.

Wordsworth's solitary reaper sings in a rustic setting in the context of rich, suggestive cultural possibilities and meanings, which the poet lists. Lincoln's Matthew sings in a pure, grief-stricken suspension of meaning itself.

In the poem's last two stanzas Lincoln returns to the idea that this community and this story were part of his home. It is as if in the sudden change of attention at the end the poet is expressing fear or ambivalence about what he has written.

And now away to seek some scene
Less painful than the last—
With less of horror mingled in
The present and the past.
The very spot where grew the bread
That formed my bones, I see.
How strange, old field, on thee to tread,
And feel I'm part of thee!

The poem's last words, "And feel I'm part of thee," are striking, echoing the association between the poet and the poem's strange, deranged central figure. Even the scene that is supposed to have "less of horror" mingled in, the field of childhood memory, involves a disturbing sense that the poet's identity is both one with the field that grew the bread that formed his bones and strange to it, even while it is underfoot.

The poet's connection with the field is elemental and personal rather than historical—this is not the field of any national military glory, or the field any poet sang, or the field of any ancestral meaning, because the human meaning of it is recent, and also perhaps tenuous. It is not quite, or is only just becoming, a cultural field, with a people who recall its stories.

The very structural jaggedness of Lincoln's poem suggests a form of memory that is at once hallowing, or nostalgic, and nightmarish. Memory in "My Childhood-Home I See Again" is in some ways futile, because the past is either buried—"every spot a grave"—or incomprehensible, like the demented figure who takes over the poem in defiance of its sentimental title and conventional framework.

Lincoln's poem is a shadowy forerunner of the sentence that opens a section of William Carlos Williams's *Spring and All*: "The pure products of America go crazy." The modernist Williams, too, describes a past that is somehow both lost and haunting. But Lincoln had a forerunner as well. The nineteenth-century gothic haunting in "My Childhood-Home I See Again" resembles in some ways the haunting in a famous poem by the eighteenth-century American poet Philip Freneau.

FRENEAU could be called the first poet of the United States of America. At the College of New Jersey, in Princeton, he and his roommate, James Madison, wrote a commencement ode that changed in successive drafts from royalist to revolutionary. Freneau fought in the Revolution and wrote as a journalist and an editorial supporter of Thomas Jefferson. It is striking that the best-known poem by this Enlightenment, revolutionary figure is a Romantic work that entails a ghost from the past.

Freneau's poem "*The Indian Burying Ground*" meditates on the notion that Indians were buried in a seated position, and imagines a successful return from death to lost scenes. As in Lincoln's poem, conventional elegy yields to something uncanny.

The posture that we give the dead
Points out the soul's eternal sleep.

Not so the ancients of these lands—
The Indian, when from his life released,
Again is seated with his friends,
And shares again the joyous feast.

His imaged birds, and painted bowl,
And venison, for a journey dressed,
Bespeak the nature of the soul,
Activity, that knows no rest.

His bow, for action ready bent,
And arrows, with a head of stone,
Can only mean that life is spent,
And not the old ideas gone.

The compact phrase "Activity, that knows no rest" is in its own way as anti-elegiac and unsentimental as the realistic phrases in Lincoln's poem. Then Freneau turns to "an agéd elm," "beneath whose far-projecting shade. . . . The children of the forest played!" His landscape, of course, contains trees that might have been seen by Indian children who never saw a European. A sense of fearful guilt toward the displaced people leads Freneau to a striking, memorable vision.

There oft a restless Indian queen
(Pale Sheba, with her braided hair)
And many a barbarous form is seen
To chide the man that lingers there.

By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews,
In habit for the chase arrayed,
The hunter still the deer pursues,
The hunter and the deer, a shade!

The dignity and spookiness of this picture are appealing.

Freneau's final stanza, in a key related to Lincoln's poem, makes explicit the issue of reason and delusion.

And long shall timorous fancy see
The painted chief, and pointed spear,
And Reason's self shall bow the knee
To shadows and delusions here.

Also as in Lincoln, the connection with the landscape is at once eerily overwhelming and as fragile as the Reason that bends its knee to Freneau's shade "In habit for the chase arrayed"—Reason that for Lincoln was "dead and gone" in the plaintive, insane dirge that he eagerly "drinks" in memory. Reason's hold on the landscape is tenuous and haunted.

In relation to the displaced culture, Freneau and his reader are like the Portuguese invaders in Elizabeth Bishop's poem "Brazil, January 1, 1502."

. . . the Christians, hard as nails,
tiny as nails, and glinting,
in creaking armor, came and found it all,
not unfamiliar:
no lovers' walks, no bowers,
no cherries to be picked, no lute music,
but corresponding, nevertheless,
to an old dream of wealth and luxury
already out of style when they left home—
wealth, plus a brand-new pleasure.
Directly after Mass, humming perhaps
L'Homme armé or some such tune,
they ripped away into the hanging fabric,
each out to catch an Indian for himself—
those maddening little women who kept calling,
calling to each other (or had the birds waked up?)
and retreating, always retreating, behind it.

The march of empire, colonization, and obliteration has made the raped and dispossessed people simultaneously haunting and unattainable, a violent emblem of the past as unrecoverable yet operative, and vaguely shaming.

REASON is dismayed or humbled in these poems by an implied quandary: How can memory do its cultural work in the absence of continuity? Is the cultural relation to the land too thin and haunting, perhaps even too guilt-ridden or problematic, to suffice? This question, I think, underlies the mysterious power of Phillips Brooks's hymn "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

O little town of Bethlehem!
How still we see thee lie,
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep,
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The Everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

What gives these lines their mysterious charge is buried memory; Brooks, best known for his famous sermon on the Civil War dead, wrote his Christmas carol when, after the war, many little towns of the North and the South were unnaturally silent, because so many of the young men were gone. "The hopes and fears of all the years" involve the Republic itself,

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and in that context the town's "deep and dreamless sleep," beneath the silent stars, is the more unsettling precisely because it is dreamless, and therefore deathlike. The hopes and fears are related to the dreamless sleep because the memory of the war dead, however implicit or suppressed, depends for its meaning upon the unknown course of the country, the still-unrevealed significance of its history.

Robert Hayden's mid-century poem "Frederick Douglass" strives for a visionary comprehension of that history, in a rhetorical effort that is all the more moving for Hayden's own situation as a black American artist of a generation that endured a range of peculiar slights, pressures, and isolation. Hayden writes of the ex-slave and moral champion,

When it is finally Ours, this freedom, this liberty,
 this beautiful
 and terrible thing, needful to man as air,
 usable as earth; when it belongs at last to all,
 when it is truly Instinct, brain matter, diastole, systole,
 reflex action; when it is finally won; when it is more
 than the gaudy mumbo jumbo of politicians:
 this man, this Douglass, this former slave, this Negro
 beaten to his knees, exiled, visioning a world
 where none is lonely, none hunted, alien,
 this man, superb in love and logic, this man
 shall be remembered.

The all but utopian reach of this social vision is nearly like that of science fiction: the memory of historical reality is both highlighted and transcended by a hyperbolically long view into the future.

Another twentieth-century African-American poet, Sterling Brown, takes a different, perhaps more artful route to a similar goal. In "Harlem Happiness," Brown borrows the urban idyll of romantic Hollywood movies, the glow around Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers that transforms the cops and storekeepers nearby. Brown adapts that idyll and daringly transforms it with the street vocabulary of American ethnic categories. In his visionary otherworld, so unlike Hayden's lofty one, Brown absorbs "dago" and "Mick" into the magic realm where all the world loves lovers, as though race were another grace note of local color for the happy pair.

I think there is in this the stuff for many lyrics:—
 A dago fruit stand at three A.M.; the wop
 asleep, his woman
 Knitting a tiny garment, laughing when we
 approached her,
 Flashing a smile from white teeth, then weighing
 out the grapes,
 Grapes large as plums, and tart and sweet as—
 well we know the lady
 And purplish red and firm, quite as this
 lady's lips are. . . .

We laughed, all three when she awoke her
 swarthy, snoring Pietro
 To make us change, which we, rich paupers,
 left to help the garment.
 We swaggered off; while they two stared, and
 laughed in understanding,
 And thanked us lovers who brought back an
 old Etrurian springtide.
 Then, once beyond their light, a step beyond
 their pearly smiling
 We tasted grapes and tasted lips, and
 laughed at sleepy Harlem,
 And when the huge Mick cop stomped by,
 a'swingin' of his billy
 You nodded to him gaily, and I kissed you
 with him looking,
 Beneath the swinging light that weakly fought
 against the mist
 That settled on Eighth Avenue, and curled
 around the houses.
 And he grinned too and understood the wisdom
 of our madness.
 That night at least the world was ours to spend,
 nor were we misers,
 Ah, Morningside with Maytime awhispering
 in the foliage!
 Alone, atop the city,—the tramps were still in shelter—
 And moralizing lights that peered up from the
 murky distance
 Seemed soft as our two cigarette ends burning
 slowly, dimly,
 And careless as the jade stars that winked upon
 our gladness. . . .

There's a brilliant irony and a flaunting of irony here, a mingled unreality and reality, the memory of the movies permeating the scene like the memory of the love lyrics that the lover quotes later in the poem. Brown's poem is as visionary as Hayden's poem on Frederick Douglass, yet it is also an actual memory as well as a dream.

Hayden's vision of the future involves a tremendously delayed healing or resolution, an alleviation of the ghost-ridden, suppressive memory that I find in the imaginations of Lincoln, Freneau, and Brooks. Brown's vision of one privileged night, a few hours bracketed from reality, gets its energy from all the suppressed memory of racism in American history. Brown writes,

And then I madly quoted lyrics from old kindred masters,
 Who wrote of you, unknowing you, for far more lucky me—

with remembered lines of Robert Herrick or Shakespeare (let's suppose) available as part of the fragile, cinematic evening.

Like all the poems I have quoted, "Harlem Happiness" raises the question of what cultural memories are available and germane to actual American experience. I associate the poem with works that point toward a sharper, more candid form of American historical memory. What might that form of national memory someday be like?

THE modern poem that takes up this question most vigorously, pointedly, and directly may be the section of William Carlos Williams's *Spring and All* that has come to be called "To Elsie."

The pure products of America
go crazy—
mountain folk from Kentucky

or the ribbed north end of
Jersey
with its isolate lakes and

valleys, its deaf-mutes, thieves
old names
and promiscuity between

devil-may-care men who have taken
to railroading
out of sheer lust of adventure—

and young slatterns, bathed
in filth
from Monday to Saturday

to be tricked out that night
with gauds
from imaginations which have no

peasant traditions to give them
character
but flutter and flaunt

sheer rags—succumbing without
emotion
save numbed terror

under some hedge of choke-cherry
or viburnum—
which they cannot express—

unless it be that marriage
perhaps
with a dash of Indian blood

will throw up a girl so desolate
so hemmed round
with disease or murder

that she'll be rescued by an
agent—
reared by the state and

sent out at fifteen to work in
some hard-pressed
house in the suburbs—

some doctor's family, some Elsie—
voluptuous water
expressing with broken

brain the truth about us—
her great
ungainly hips and flopping breasts

addressed to cheap
jewelry
and rich young men with fine eyes

as if the earth under our feet
were
an excrement of some sky

and we degraded prisoners
destined
to hunger until we eat filth

while the imagination strains
after deer
going by fields of goldenrod in

the stifling heat of September
Somehow
it seems to destroy us

It is only in isolate flecks that
something
is given off

No one
to witness
and adjust, no one to drive the car

Here both the craving and the terror of memory find bold expression in a specifically and indeed assertively American context. One admirable quality of Williams's poem is its confident manifestation in language of the American culture it questions: from the expression "go crazy" in its opening lines to the final note of "no one to drive the car," this poem embodies American manners, and by implication American culture. The word "car," at the end of a poem so dark in its presentation of the national culture, is like a palliative. (The word also reminds me of how Williams welcomes modern, industrial cultural experience into poetry by describing the landscape as it looks from a car, as in "By the Road to the Contagious Hospital" and "The Young Housewife.")

Even the way the poet inserts himself into the narrative frame, "some hard-pressed / house in the suburbs— / some doctor's family, some Elsie—," so notably without bardic grandiosity, constitutes another instance of American manners. Like his use of the word "car," Williams's calm inclusion of his middle-class, ordinary household implies a hopeful normality, counterbalancing the despair and degradation of the poem's beginning and its final words—the envisioned triumph of madness over culture.

For in Williams's poem the failure of memory, the absence

of peasant traditions or some adequate substitute for them, does entail a triumph of madness as complete as the dark of Lincoln's poor Matthew, the land becoming to us nothing more than "an excrement of some sky." If the landscape is not haunted, Williams implies, then it is a meaningless excrement, frustrating the hunger of the imagination, and we are "degraded prisoners," like Lincoln's staring, writhing, and cursing character.

The poem's action of remembering Elsie, trying to trace the stream of her personal and extended history, is accompanied

Robert Frost suggests that
our destiny may lie in the act
of historical recovery—and
that the source of wholeness is
in memory. History is a quest.
The project of shaping ourselves
as a people has only begun.

by tributary acts of memory: recalling the geology of New Jersey and the Appalachians, recalling Indian blood and the nearly theatrical language of "tricked out with gauds," recalling the adventure of railroading and plant names like viburnum and choke-cherry, recalling the imagination itself and its need to be fed. The action of all these poems—Lincoln's elegy, Freneau's meditation, Brooks's hymn, Hayden's tribute to Douglass, Brown's poem—might be described as the effort to remember in order to maintain sanity.

WILLIAMS speaks of the "pure" products of America; what they appear to be pure of is history. He envisions a terrifying temporal isolation or silence that recalls the final state of Lincoln's poor madman. Part of Williams's undertaking as a writer was to supply a kind of history that would be American: memory that was not "pure" in this sense of unreflected isolation.

In this matter of memory and also in the matter of language, Williams has considerable affinity with the work of a poet with whom he is too often contrasted, without acknowledgment of their similarities—Robert Frost. In "The Gift Outright," a poem I have always found unsatisfying, Frost speaks of peopledom as an attainment, and a *fait accompli*.

The land was ours before we were the land's.
She was our land more than a hundred years
Before we were her people. She was ours

In Massachusetts, in Virginia,
But we were England's, still colonials,
Possessing what we still were unpossessed by,
Possessed by what we now no more possessed.

There is an element in these lines that springs more from rhetoric than from historical memory: the project is celebrated and summarized but not embodied. Though the poem is itself part of shared memory, because of the indelible image of Frost reading it at John F. Kennedy's inauguration, it lacks reality. With a "we" that is not quite plausible, Frost skillfully, even brilliantly, glosses over a host of difficult questions about American history and identity. Or so I feel, and my feeling is captured in "Legacy," by the contemporary poet Frank Bidart. Bidart brings Williams's "To Elsie" into collision with Frost's "The Gift Outright"; however, the story he tells is not the story of the two poems he alludes to but that of an American family and its history.

*When to the desert, the dirt,
comes water
comes money
to get off the shitter
land and move to the city
whence you
direct the work of those who now
work the land you still own*

My grandparents left home for the American
desert to escape
poverty, or the family who said *You are
the son who shall become a priest*

*After Spain became
Franco's, at last
rich enough*

*to return you
refused to return*

*The West you made
was never unstoried, never
artless*

*Excrement of the sky our rage inherits
there was no gift
outright we were never the land's*

This poem gives an account of the United States as "never unstoried, never/artless," though the country, in its haunting, may have pretended, as perhaps "The Gift Outright" pretends, that it replaced Europe with a kind of tabula rasa. The country was never pure, Bidart indicates: Lincoln's Matthew had a past as surely as did Freneau's tree. By remembering the European past and recalling a severe, de-sentimentalized account of the process of becoming American, Bidart gives a portrait of the United States in which the people are the opposite in spirit of anything like a *Bildungsbürgertum*. But by that act of memory, and by choosing to remember both Frost's poem and Williams's

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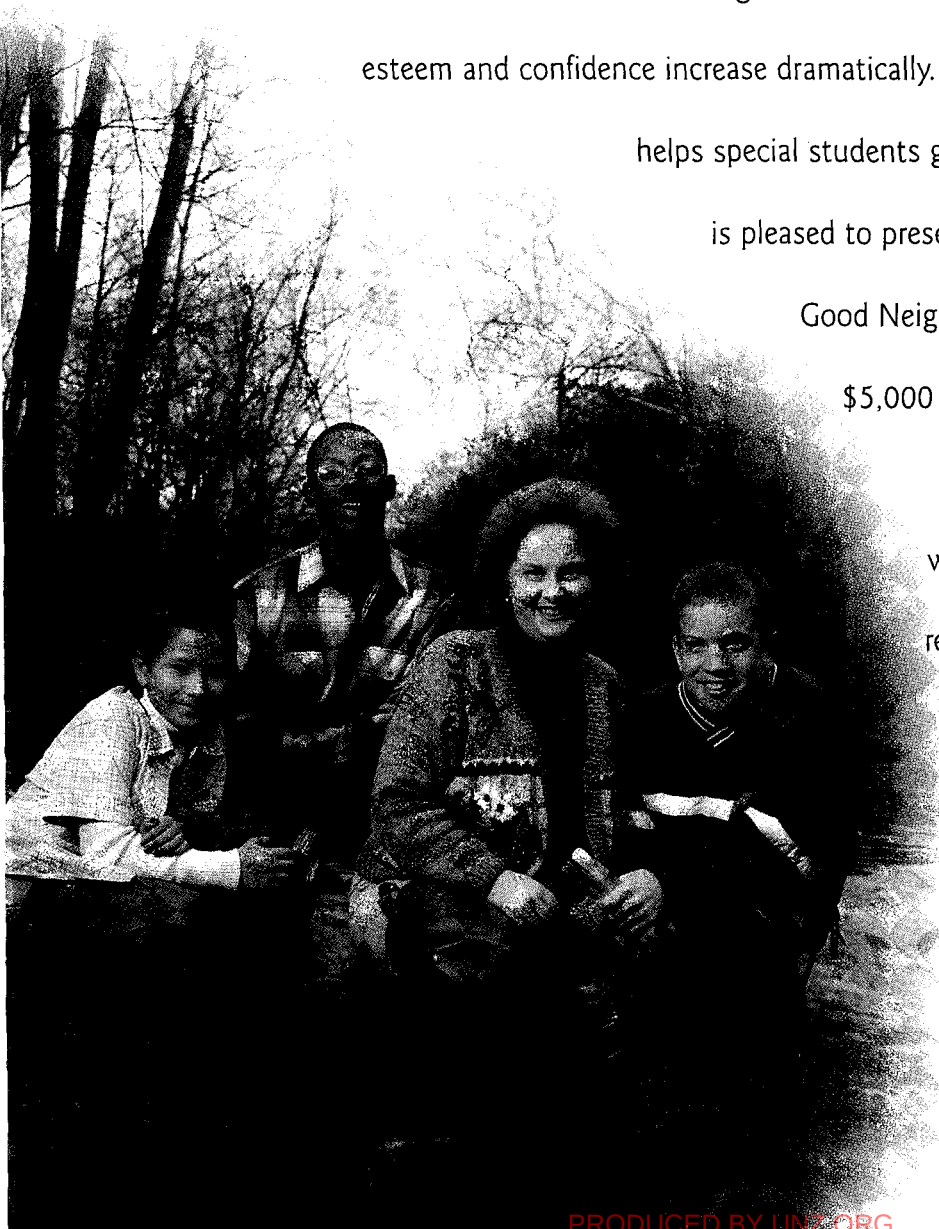


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in his allusive concluding phrases, Bidart contributes with a bold directness to the project of American memory.

PERHAPS the most profound poetic contribution to that project is Robert Frost's poem "Directive," which presents the undertaking of American memory as dire and frightening as well as arduous. The memory in the poem rests partly on the fact that in New England every year thousands of acres revert from farmland to forest; the past is revealed in stone walls that one comes upon in the woods, and in fading, overgrown cellar holes.

Back out of all this now too much for us,
Back in a time made simple by the loss
Of detail, burned, dissolved, and broken off
Like graveyard marble sculpture in the weather,
There is a house that is no more a house
Upon a farm that is no more a farm
And in a town that is no more a town.
The road there, if you'll let a guide direct you
Who only has at heart your getting lost,
May seem as if it should have been a quarry—
Great monolithic knees the former town
Long since gave up pretense of keeping covered.
And there's a story in a book about it:
Besides the wear of iron wagon wheels
The ledges show lines ruled southeast northwest,
The chisel work of an enormous Glacier
That braced his feet against the Arctic Pole.
You must not mind a certain coolness from him
Still said to haunt this side of Panther Mountain.
Nor need you mind the serial ordeal
Of being watched from forty cellar holes
As if by eye pairs out of forty firkins.
As for the woods' excitement over you
That sends light rustle rushes to their leaves,
Charge that to upstart inexperience.
Where were they all not twenty years ago?
They think too much of having shaded out
A few old pecker-fretted apple trees.
Make yourself up a cheering song of how
Someone's road home from work this once was,
Who may be just ahead of you on foot
Or creaking with a buggy load of grain.
The height of the adventure is the height
Of country where two village cultures faded
Into each other. Both of them are lost.
And if you're lost enough to find yourself
By now, pull in your ladder road behind you

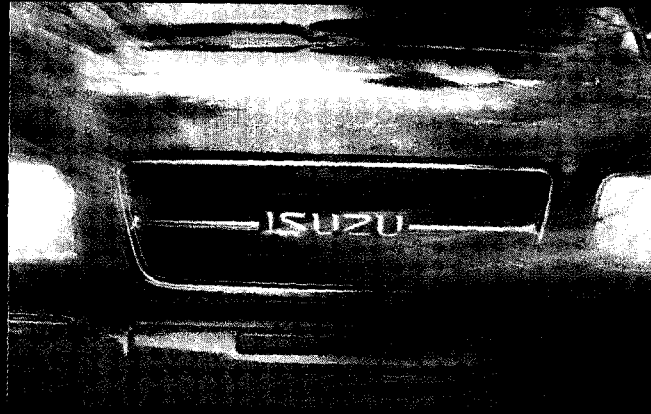
And put up a sign CLOSED to all but me.
Then make yourself at home. The only field
Now left's no bigger than a harness gall.
First there's the children's house of make believe,
Some shattered dishes underneath a pine,
The playthings in the playhouse of the children.
Weep for what little things could make them glad.
Then for the house that is no more a house,
But only a belilaced cellar hole,
Now slowly closing like a dent in dough.
This was no playhouse but a house in earnest.
Your destination and your destiny's
A brook that was the water of the house,
Cold as a spring as yet so near its source,
Too lofty and original to rage.
(We know the valley streams that when aroused
Will leave their tatters hung on barb and thorn.)
I have kept hidden in the instep arch
Of an old cedar at the waterside
A broken drinking goblet like the Grail
Under a spell so the wrong ones can't find it,
So can't get saved, as Saint Mark says they mustn't.
(I stole the goblet from the children's playhouse.)
Here are your waters and your watering place.
Drink and be whole again beyond confusion.

In this poem Frost suggests that our destiny as a people may lie in the difficult action of historical recovery—and that the source of wholeness is in memory. Here the past is presented as a mysterious spiritual reality: attainable not through the spectacle of re-creation but through a journey. History is a quest, not a diorama. His challenge here should be inspiring. The project of shaping ourselves as a people, his poem implies, has only begun. "Beyond confusion," our cultural work still lies ahead of us.

"Directive" should be part of American memory because it is a lyric about the fragile, heroic enterprise of remembering. Who will remember the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence? That familiar question must be amplified. Who will remember the poems of Emily Dickinson and the films of Buster Keaton, the music of Charlie Parker and the prose of Mark Twain? Who will remember that Gabriel García Márquez said that the best novel ever written about Latin America is *The Hamlet*, by William Faulkner? Or if this sketchy beginning of a catalogue merely suggests my personal, idiosyncratic canon, then put it this way: Who will remember the great work of memory itself, that basic human task? Deciding to remember, and what to remember, is how we decide who we are. ☼

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Lulu, Queen of the Camels

by CULLEN MURPHY

*In its loopy way the dromedary
camel is already perfect,
but in recent years biologists have
been competing to refine it.
The motivation comes from camel
racing—the Sport
of Sheikhs*

JULIAN Skidmore is lithe and petite, with small wrists and delicate features, and a serene but determined countenance. Watching Skidmore at work for a while, her auburn hair held back by a blue ribbon, a glint of light catching the small pearl in each earlobe, I was reminded of Gainsborough's portrait of the young Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire. Then Skidmore removed her left arm from a camel's rectum, peeled off a shoulder-length Krause Super-Sensitive disposable examination glove, and said, "Can I make you a cup of coffee?" She had completed eight of the morning's sixteen ultrasound scans. It was time for a break.

Skidmore, an Englishwoman known to everyone as Lulu, has emerged during the past few years as among the foremost practitioners in one of the world's more improbable growth industries. There are many reasons why *Camelus dromedarius*, the single-humped dromedary camel of Africa, Arabia, and southern Asia, might have deserved to become a focus of scientific investment. To begin with, about 14 million of these animals roam the planet. The dromedary camel is a baroque masterpiece of biological engineering. It is relied upon by millions of people for meat and milk, and as a means of transportation. In truth, however, the impetus to scientific study came from none of these things. It came from a passion for competitive camel racing on the part of Middle Eastern sheikhs, who have been known to pay more than \$1 million for a supe-



rior racing camel, and who relish the prospect of a breeding program for camels similar to what has long existed for thoroughbred racehorses. Establishing such a program has turned out to be harder than anyone anticipated.

Lulu Skidmore works for His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, the crown prince of Dubai and the Defense Minister of the United Arab Emirates. The Maktoum family, which has ruled Dubai since the 1830s, has for decades been among the most powerful forces in the world of horse racing. Sheikh Mohammed himself owns more thoroughbred racehorses than anyone else in the world, and during



a typical year in British competition the horses fielded by the Maktoum family's Godolphin Stables claim the greatest number of wins. Outside the Middle East the sheikh's deep interest in the ancient sport of camel racing is not well known. But the Maktoums are reputed to own a herd of 10,000 camels, and Sheikh Mohammed keeps a string of 2,000. His camels are eyed with envy by other sheikhs, and his stable maintains an imposing presence on the camel tracks of the Arab world.

The demands of camel racing have created, almost overnight, a thriving new field of biological endeavor—one that has proved irresistible even to researchers who began their

careers with a different focus entirely. Two decades ago the field of camel biology was virtually nonexistent. For all the lore and mystique surrounding the camel, the byways of its physical functioning were far less well known than those of the cat, the rat, or the nematode. And yet by 1992 the First International Camel Conference could draw some 200 specialists to Dubai. A second international conference is now being planned.

Lulu Skidmore is already looking beyond that point. "Obviously, the motivation for all this work was racing," she says. "But the sheikh is keen that Dubai should be on the

map. From Dubai's point of view, it is important to be on the map in the world of science as well as in the world of camel racing. And the science could be doing a lot of good for other countries."

THE desert sheikhdom of Dubai, one of the seven sheikhdoms that make up the United Arab Emirates, is essentially a city-state straddling a strategic inlet on the northeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula, across the Persian Gulf from Iran. Oil was discovered in Dubai only three decades ago, and the oil will probably run out before another three decades have passed. The rulers of Dubai have set out to make the sheikhdom a mercantile entrepôt and financial hub, and they are succeeding. Skyscrapers in compelling shapes rise above Dubai Creek, where dhows are moored five deep along the waterfront. Construction is under way everywhere, and open trucks haul immigrant workers from site to site. In the older parts of the city elegant wind towers of stone and daub rise above the houses, trapping the gulf breezes and directing them below. Desalination plants make possible golf courses and polo grounds and lush median strips. The souks are clean and freshly swept, and not far distant from shopping malls where the names Armani and Ralph Lauren and Moschino are prominent. There is no crime to speak of; the main local newspaper ran a story while I was there, earlier this year, about the trial of someone who had been charged with pickpocketing.

On the streets native Emiratis gownned in crisp white *dishdashas*, their heads covered with red-and-white-checked *gut-ras*, walk among a population that has become polychrome and polyglot. At the Hotel Inter-Continental the daily breakfast buffet features French toast, salted hammour fish, baked beans, channa masala, miso soup, fried rice, lamb chops, and Cheerios. Television channels are available in Japanese and Hindi. The one bookstore I found in Dubai had an aisle devoted to "Oprah's Book Club." Women in Dubai may drive cars, and Western women may lie on the beach in bikinis. But there is no lack of reminders about where you really are. On a table in my hotel room a small sticker with an arrow labeled *QIBLA* showed the direction for prayer. Minarets rise above every neighborhood. A banner at an important intersection reminds the passing traffic, in Arabic and English, "Don't Forget Kuwait's Missing POWs."

The camel track lies on the outskirts of Dubai, at a place called Nad al Sheba, and during the racing season the green, red, white, and black national flag of the Emirates flutters atop high poles that line the road leading out from town. The races take place on a vast oval more than six miles around. In Saudi Arabia the races may go twice as far. Camels are not as fast as racehorses, but they have a lot more stamina—they start out at about forty miles an hour, and can hold a pace of twenty miles an hour for more than half an hour. They have been known to run at ten miles an hour for eighteen hours. The designation *dromedarius* has nothing to do with humps—it comes from the Greek word for "running." If the Greek were more can-

did, it would mean "running with a loopy gait while maintaining an expression of haughty insouciance."

During a race, in which fifty or more camels may compete, trainers and owners in jeeps speed around the inside of the track, talking with their jockeys by radio. The jockeys are helmeted boys, each riding behind his camel's hump and wielding a riding crop the length of a fishing rod. (Because weight makes a difference, the age of jockeys has been an issue for years in some parts of the camel-racing world; in Dubai the minimum weight was officially set not long ago at about 100 pounds, and authorities have cracked down on offenders in several highly publicized recent cases.) I watched scores of jockeys at play one afternoon as a dusky blood-orange sun hovered above the sands and turned the boys into lines of flickering shadow that seemed to stretch to the horizon. Behind them camels by the hundreds were led by trainers from the racetrack to the far stables, diminishing ultimately into little more than silhouetted flecks of movement. Looking at the sky, I would not have been surprised to see the words "A David Lean Production."

Camel racing has always been a Bedouin pastime. But only during the past twenty years or so has it become a highly organized activity—the Sport of Sheikhs, as it might be called, with large investments in bloodlines and facilities. In the 1990s a dozen new camel racetracks have been built in the Emirates alone. During the month of March camel racing is to Arabian television what basketball is to American. The grandstand at Nad al Sheba, under its tentlike canopy, resembles a diminutive Denver airport. It is set among date palms on a manicured lawn that covers the desert like a putting green. The crowd at a camel race is diverse: members of the ruling family are thrown together with laborers from Pakistan and Britons in blue blazers. No betting is permitted, because Islam frowns on gambling. But a lottery dispenses door prizes among the spectators, and the prizes carry the names Lexus and Range Rover. At Nad al Sheba the morning races are primarily for camels owned by sheikhs and the afternoon races are reserved for everyone else. A Bedouin's dream is to win one of these afternoon races and sell the victorious camel to a sheikh on the spot.

The intense interest in camel racing in the Emirates is not so much about money as about cultural heritage. The traditional Bedouin way of life is verging on extinction, but the animal at its heart can still be exalted. It is difficult to overestimate the centrality of the camel in the Arab imagination. The Koran praises the horse and the sheep, but then comments pointedly, "The Almighty in making animals created nothing preferable to the camel." Speakers of Arabic have many words to express every refinement of the cameloid condition. *Dhaqun*, for instance, refers to "a she-camel that relaxes her chin so as to make her lower lip hang down while going along." Four-wheel drive has supplanted the camel's traditional function as a means of conveyance; nowadays you'll often see camels themselves being driven around in trucks. But people continue to hold camels in the highest esteem.

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Inevitably, the fires of cultural nationalism have been fanned by the simoon of competition. The camel-racing sheikhs have ample resources, and they have sunk vast sums into the buying and training of camels. There are some 14,000 active racing camels in the Emirates. The sheikhs have built special treadmills and swimming pools to give the animals exercise. They have experimented with dietary supplements. They have mounted attacks on trypanosomosis and camel pox. They have hired physiologists, nutritionists, even psychologists. And, of course, they have begun to think about improving the racing stock, through scientific breeding programs and careful attention to pedigree.

Here the devotees of modern camel racing have faced a challenge. Think of the issue as a problem in mathematics. A thoroughbred racehorse starts competition at the age of two, and its career may be pretty well over by the age of four or five. It can begin life as a dam or a sire very early, and the track records of its progeny will be known within a few years—as will the track records of *their* progeny, and their progeny's progeny, and so on.

With camels each step in this process is more time-consuming. A camel is not mature enough to start racing until the age of five or six, and its competitive abilities are not known until the age of six or seven. Scientific breeding can then start, but it will be another seven or eight years before the careers of the camel's first offspring can be evaluated.

Moreover, there won't be all that many offspring. In horse breeding a successful stallion can sire fifty to eighty foals a year, and may go to its grave with a thousand living descendants. But the preferred racing camels are female; the males are relatively ill-tempered and difficult to deal with. Each pregnancy lasts thirteen months, and in a typical reproductive lifetime of twenty years a camel may bear no more than about twelve calves. Here's an added element of torment for breeders: a camel's racing life potentially extends for many years beyond its reproductive maturity, and each pregnancy means the loss of more than a year of competition by what may be one of the fastest racing camels in Arabia.

There would be no way around these problems if the rules of thoroughbred horse racing applied to camels. Thoroughbreds must be conceived and brought to term the natural way—no shortcuts allowed, however enticing the options offered today by artificial insemination, embryo transfer, and other reproductive technologies. The traditionalism of thoroughbred breeding underlies the lucrative system of stud farms and the global cycling of prime stallions, who chase the hemi-

spheric springtime from north to south, and in a good year may cover scores of mares apiece. But there is no Jockey Club in camel racing to lay down this kind of law, and there is plenty of money for science.

THE desert in Dubai is as much a time as it is a place: it begins the moment resistance to it relents. The desert runs unbroken from Dubai City to the Hajar Mountains. Twenty-five miles southeast of Dubai, at Nakhlee, on the highway to Hatta, a gatepost sign you could easily miss marks an unpaved road to the right. Early one morning Lulu Skidmore pulled off the highway and onto this road. The sandy embankment on both sides was strewn with the yellow fruit known as desert apples. Geckos darted about. Down the road a little ways was a compound of low-slung other buildings. Camels stood in wire stockades everywhere: black camels from Saudi Arabia, tan camels from the Emirates, white camels from Sudan. In

Depending on your
point of view, the camel
is either the most
improbable of animals
or the only possible
one under the circum-
stances. Sexually,
it is decidedly
out of the ordinary.



the stockades the females had been separated from the males. The males had been separated from one another.

This is the Camel Reproduction Centre, where Skidmore is the scientific director. The laboratory is a mainstay of Arabia's camel infrastructure—its Los Alamos, perhaps. Another mainstay is the Dubai Camel Hospital, near the Nad al Sheba racetrack, which serves as Skidmore's office. (One room in the hospital complex holds a raised slab with a large hole cut out of the middle. Skidmore responded to my raised eyebrow: "For the hump. It's an operating table.") Abu Dhabi, the sheikhdom adjacent to Dubai on the west, and the richest of the emirates, is home to three research stations: the Sheikh Hazza Camel Reproduction Research Centre, the Sheikh Khalifa Camel Embryo Transfer Research Centre, and the Sheikh Khalifa Scientific Centre for Racing Camels. The Saudis operate a Camel Research Centre at King Faisal Uni-

versity, in Al-Ahsa. Sultan Qaboos, of Oman, runs a small research facility in Muscat. All these places rely on imported staff and consultants, who have come from England and America, Australia and South Africa, and whose presence affirms the Koran's insight: Horses and sheep may be wonderful, but there is nothing preferable to the camel.

Skidmore was driving a Nissan Super Safari and talking on her ever-present cell phone. Its ring, a tinny version of "Whistle While You Work," serves as a kind of Lulu Positioning System. We drove past several men in long tunics and baggy pants—tribesmen from somewhere on the Afghan-Pakistan border. "The boys," Skidmore called them, or sometimes, more formally, "the camel guys." They looked vigilant and implacable. The camel guys were tethering a small herd of camels outside the entrance to the lab's examining bay, where the animals would be given ultrasound scans. We drove past a stocky young man who smiled and waved. This was Tipu Billah, who in effect manages the Camel Reproduction Centre. I have also seen him described, in some literature about the facility, as the person who "perfected the technique for collection of semen from camels for insemination purposes." We drove on a little farther, made a loop around the stockades, and came back to the compound. In a pen near the entrance a vaguely llama-like creature kicked around a soccer ball, happily oblivious. "That's Rama," Skidmore said. I learned more about him later.

Inside, Skidmore showed off her lab—her incubators, her freezers, her progesterone-assay machine, her semen-loading machine—and introduced the lab technician, Ajaz Hussain. Then she donned beige coveralls, went out to the examining bay, and pulled a latex examination glove over her left arm. Ajaz Hussain handed her the ultrasound scanner.

For the next hour and a half the camel guys orchestrated a decorous pavane. A camel would be led in and made to sit, its double-jointed hind legs collapsing tidily above a rope laid on the floor. The ends of the rope were pulled up and knotted atop the camel's back, immobilizing the animal. The camel guys put down a shovelful of feed where the camel could reach it. As the camel began to eat, Skidmore sat down on a mat near its other end, scooped out thirty or forty pellets of dry feces, and entered the rectum with the scanner until it reached a point just above the uterus, which offered sonic access to the ovaries. Skidmore's head was tilted up to the right, toward a video monitor on a low trolley. The grainy image on the monitor segued through wobbly mutations and then settled itself: Skidmore had found a follicle, and was counting eggs. She reported her findings aloud—"Another couple of days before she's at the right stage"—as Ajaz Hussain took notes. By then the camel guys had prepared another animal for examination. Skidmore withdrew the scanner, stood up, kicked the mat over to the next camel, sat down, and repeated the drill. She performed eight examinations, took a break, and performed eight more. This is how Skidmore spends every morning during the dromedary camel's reproductive season. The season runs from October to April.

Here is what Skidmore is up to. Using hormones, she wants to "superovulate your top-class female," as she puts it—that is, stimulate the very best racing camels to produce more than one egg at a time. (Her record is twenty-five.) She wants to fertilize those eggs, either by actually mating the female with a desired male or by means of artificial insemination. Eight days after fertilization she wants to harvest all the embryos—she passes a balloon catheter through the cervix, inflates the balloon to seal the opening, fills the uterus with a saline solution, and then drains the solution, flushing the embryos out. Finally, she wants to transfer the microscopic embryos into the wombs of run-of-the-mill camels who can carry the embryos to term, allowing the biological mother to return to racing. To undertake these interventions Skidmore needs to monitor every stage of every breeding camel's reproductive cycle with ultrasound scans and hormone assays. Getting to the point where clinical data even made any sense required tedious baseline studies, consuming Skidmore's first few years on the job. How do camels produce follicles? When do they show estrus? If they conceive, what are the hormonal changes? If they don't conceive, when do they come back in to estrus? There was nothing about any of this in the clinical literature.

During the break Skidmore sipped her coffee and gave some instructions to Tipu. Through the window I had noticed a female camel squatting expectantly in the sand, out by the stockades, and now one of the camel guys was leading a stallion toward her. The stallion was displaying his soft palate, a declaration of intent. From a shelf Tipu took what looked like a protective sheath for a telescope, a black rubber device about thirty inches long and five inches wide, open at one end and with a clear-plastic receptacle at the other. He tilted the opening toward me, displaying a precise configuration of foam rubber inside. "Very important to be just like the cervix," he explained. "Took many, many tries." He turned away and reached again for the shelf, retrieving a dented tube of K-Y lubricant.

Skidmore said to me, "I'll just be doing more of the same. Why don't you go with Tipu?"

DEPENDING on your point of view, the dromedary camel is either the most improbable of animals or the only possible animal under the circumstances. Its split upper lip allows it to remove acacia leaves from among the spiky thorns—and yet its sharp teeth allow it to masticate thorny plants if it must. To shut out the blowing sand it has two sets of eyelashes, and nostrils that close tight. It can go for more than two weeks without drinking water, and when it does drink, it can tolerate salts and poisons that would kill a human being. The hump is not, of course, a water tank, as children sometimes think, though it does store a supply of fats that can be drawn down over time. What makes the camel resistant to heat and dehydration is its curious and still somewhat mystifying metabolism, which includes a thermal regulator that permits variations in body temperature of as much as eleven degrees in the course of a day. A camel filters out toxins so

relentlessly and conserves water so stingily that it urinates only very small amounts. Arduous conditions may cause a camel's body mass to drop by 25 percent in a week—a decline that would prove fatal in other mammals. When water again becomes available, camels can drink an amount equal to a third of their weight in ten minutes. Oddly, this animal, so well adapted to places without water, is a more adept natural swimmer than the horse.

Sexually, the camel is decidedly out of the ordinary, as research by Skidmore and others has made clear. The editors of the *Proceedings of the First International Camel Conference*, themselves well adapted to dry conditions, address the subject with nearly imperceptible whimsy. They observe, "Aspects of the reproductive mechanism appear to have been borrowed from many different genera such that it represents a strange 'hotch potch' of ideas and systems when viewed through the blinkered spectacles of the modern reproductive physiologist."

The female camel has an uneven uterus—it ovulates from both of the organ's horns but implants only in the left one. Like the female ferret and the female cat, the female camel is an "induced ovulator"—under natural conditions she will not actually release an egg until prompted to do so by the stimulus of mating. Male camels have their own peculiarities. A stallion can't bring himself to ejaculate in the vagina—he must be able to penetrate the very tight cervix. Hence the importance of Tipu's special foam-rubber lining. Perhaps owing to all the extra effort, male camels don't have the libido one might expect. Even at the height of the season they don't go around mating with everything in sight.

MORNING

The black olive

shakes the cup of the morning glory
like a fisherman swirling his cognac glass
to catch the early sun

and the small bee

sports little Turkish pants of pollen
snatched from his campaign
among the geraniums.

The spider

spinning in the baby's bassinet
means no harm
and will not hurt him.

—ANDREAS KARAVIS
translated by David Solway

Lulu Skidmore came to camel research through her connection with the Equine Fertility Unit, a veterinary research facility in Newmarket, England, funded primarily by the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association. This is also, in a way, how Sheikh Mohammed came to camel research. The town of Newmarket, which lies about fifteen miles east of Cambridge, in Suffolk, has been the center of British racing since the days of Charles II. Its undulating heath supports scores of stud farms and pastures of the richest green, set off by tendrils of white fencing. An even brighter shade of green, in the distance, draws attention to the roof of Tattersalls', the blood-stock auction house. Around Newmarket everyone seems to have muddy boots and clear complexions, and a windswept flush on the cheeks. The racetrack at Newmarket Heath lies within the largest cultivated grassland in Europe; running right across the course are the remnants of the Devil's Ditch, a defensive earthenwork dating from early medieval times. This is what Lulu Skidmore's ancestors were building when Sheikh Mohammed's were inventing algebra.

As the Maktoum family moved heavily into horse racing, Sheikh Mohammed began buying stud farms in the Newmarket area. He now owns nine of them, including Dalham Hall, Hadrian, Rutland, Sommeries, and Dunchurch Lodge. With the Newmarket domains came proximity to the world of equine science, and specifically to the work of W. R. Allen. Allen, fifty-seven, is a professor of equine reproduction at Cambridge University and the director of the Equine Fertility Unit. The unit, which occupies 114 acres in a corner of the Duke of Sutherland's estate at Stetchworth, is devoted to studying reproductive problems in thoroughbred mares and stallions, an endeavor that frequently takes off in tangential directions. Its work is an outgrowth of the now-defunct Animal Research Station, in Cambridge, which pioneered embryo transfer in animals, and also pioneered semen freezing, embryo freezing, and embryo splitting. Known to everyone as Twink, Allen is a bluff, gregarious, straight-talking New Zealander. When I called to ask if I could come by, he consulted his calendar and said, "Monday at four for tea or Tuesday at six for gin." Strolling among the paddocks at dusk, after tea, he said matter-of-factly, "I want to be the first to clone a horse." Describing the challenge posed by the camel's cervix, he said, "Getting into it is pretty sporty."

When Sheikh Mohammed decided to pursue camel research, Twink Allen was an obvious person to consult. The sheikh knew the work of the Equine Fertility Unit—indeed, all the unit's hay barns and most of its fences had come secondhand from the sheikh when he decided to rebuild two of his nearby stud farms. Allen's son-in-law is Frankie Dettori, the house jockey for the Maktoum family's Godolphin team. At the sheikh's invitation, Allen set out to create, in Dubai, something akin to an Equine Fertility Unit for camels. The effort proceeded slowly. For one thing, managing a facility in Dubai from a desk in Newmarket proved to be impractical. Moreover, the assumption that the camel was a horse with a hump turned out to

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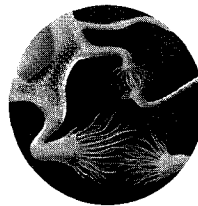
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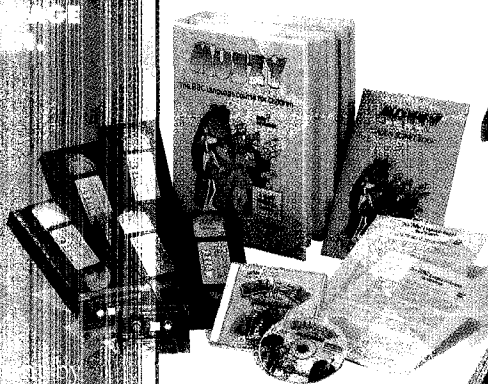


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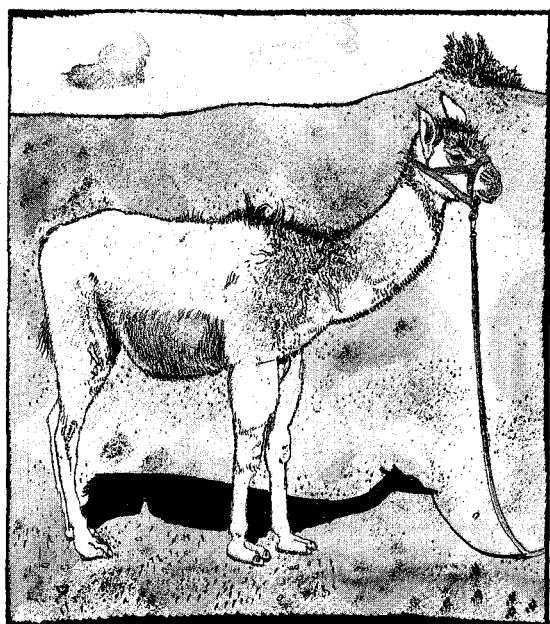
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be simplistic—as noted, all the basic science had to be done from scratch. Also, camels were not easy to handle: they could be stubborn and irascible, and proved intolerant of the poking and probing that cows and horses, standing upright, blithely accept. A single ultrasound scan might take hours.

Lulu Skidmore volunteered to take on the whole project. Skidmore had been what Allen calls the “embryo girl” at Newmarket—responsible for flushing and preserving embryos in nonthoroughbred breeding experiments—and had participated in the start-up work in Dubai. She had been an enthusiastic horsewoman all her life, had worked on a stud farm in South Africa, and had earned a degree in animal science from the University of London. She was independent and self-confident, with an adventurous streak. A senior Australian colleague, Professor Roger Short, advised Skidmore, as she later told me, “Look—forget horses. Everybody knows everything about horses. If I were you, I’d go into camels. Nobody knows



Rama the cama
is so far the only
one of his kind.
His story began
30 million years
ago, when the
two main camel
genera started
to separate.

a thing about camels. You could be the queen of the field.” So she proposed herself for the job of “camel girl”—her term. Sheikh Mohammed’s chief veterinary adviser, Ahmed Mustansir Billah, agreed to give it a try. The thought of working as a woman in an Arab culture did not bother Skidmore, and her hard work and obvious skill seem to have quelled any objections. Sheikh Mohammed himself underwrote her doctoral dissertation.

Her first decree as queen was to allow the camels to sit in her presence. No more upright palpation. It made all the difference. In our conversation Twink Allen kept drifting back to Skidmore’s calming way with her subjects, describing it in a tone of awe. “She could pop in and scan the ovaries, which is what we needed to do, but that damn camel hardly knew she was there. I’ve seen them almost look around—‘Oh, it’s you, Lulu. Good morning’—and carry on eating. When we were

there, it sounded like a slaughterhouse with this banging and crashing, and camels moaning and groaning. Now it’s like a morgue: shuffle, shuffle, shuffle, onto the ground, and away she goes and scans them. We designed some basic experiments to determine the reproductive physiology of the camel, which she completed and wrote up, and then she went on to do embryo transfer. Again, those small hands and the gentle female touch were helpful getting into the camel’s vagina. Camels don’t like it, whereas cows and horses don’t give a damn.”

Sheikh Mohammed endowed the Camel Reproduction Centre with a hundred racing camels and five stallions. Breeding experiments have brought the number to upwards of 200 camels. Promising bloodlines can now be developed, though the crucible of the racetrack remains several seasons away. A few minutes before it was placed in a surrogate, I examined under a microscope an embryo flushed from a valuable racing camel identified only as No. 1805. The embryo looked unremarkable—a translucent circle with a bulbous rim. But in six years or so it may carry the sheikh’s colors at Nad al Sheba.

“THAT was fast,” Skidmore said when Tipu and I returned from outside. Tipu had taken up position at a strategic moment, engineering the interception. Now he held the black-rubber tube by its neck, like a snake; the clear-plastic receptacle, at the other end, looked milky white. The storage of frozen sperm and frozen embryos has become routine for many animals, including horses and human beings, but camel sperm and camel embryos have so far

proved largely uncooperative. Two visiting researchers at the lab, a woman from Cambridge University and a woman from Omaha’s Henry Doorly Zoo, had some new techniques they wanted to try. They took Tipu’s offering and went to work.

The camel research stations in Abu Dhabi and elsewhere have had their eye mainly on the racetrack finish line; one has begun to show interest in breeding endangered species. The research agenda of the Camel Reproduction Centre is considerably broader. Ahmed Mustansir Billah, who oversees the Maktoum faunal enterprises, and who is Skidmore’s administrative superior, is insistent about that. I visited Billah one morning at his office on the grounds of the sprawling Zabeel Feed Mill, which prepares specially enhanced and highly secret comestibles for Sheikh Mohammed’s quails and falcons, his ostriches and flamingos, his gazelles and foxes, and above all his horses and camels. The Zabeel Feed Mill is adjacent to

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Sheikh Mohammed's Zabeel Stables, and the Zabeel insignia—a white star on a maroon background—is prevalent. Bags of feed stamped with the Zabeel colors are moved by forklift. Employees in Zabeel jumpsuits scurry about. If this were a James Bond movie, a silo would open up and a white star would appear on the nose cone of a maroon missile.

Billah, who is Tipu's brother-in-law, proudly indicated a pile of books on top of a filing cabinet—copies of the camel conference's published *Proceedings*. In the lilting cadence of his native Pakistan, Billah's conversation ranged over many subjects relating to camels, including their personal qualities ("Such an affectionate animal—given a choice, I would always choose a camel over a horse") and their gastronomical potential ("If you go for a tender one, it is very delicious, with a slightly sharp taste"). But always he emphasized the importance of the basic science being done in Dubai: "In terms of scientific achievement we are far and away ahead of anyone else. Far and away. Our work is internationally recognized." Camel research, he wanted me to understand, isn't just for racing anymore.

The vaguely llama-like creature at the Camel Reproduction Centre, who spends his time kicking a soccer ball around, is a case in point. The story of Rama, as Skidmore had called him, began some 30 million years ago, when the two main camel genera started to separate. The family *Camelidae* had originated in North America. One branch eventually moved south, to the Andes, evolving into the genus *Lama*, which includes the guanaco (domesticated by the Incas into the modern llama) and the vicuña (domesticated into the alpaca). These New World camels became adapted to life at very high elevations and very low temperatures. The other branch of the family, which developed into the genus *Camelus*, moved north to Alaska and crossed into Siberia, eventually becoming the two-humped Bactrian camel of Mongolia and the one-humped dromedary camel that spread from northern India to Arabia to northern Africa. (It is a relative newcomer to Africa: the camel was unknown to the ancient Egyptians.) These Old World camels became adapted to living at sea level in hot, dry conditions.

Could the two branches be rejoined? They have the same number of chromosomes and the same reproductive oddities. But the Old World camels are by now six times as large as the New World ones. Inhabiting opposite sides of the Equator, the two species also evolved so as to become reproductively active at different times of the year. Unlike mules, which are produced by unions of horses and donkeys, hybrids of camel and llama would never occur naturally. However, artificial insemination and hormone therapy open a world of possibility.

After many setbacks, Skidmore was able to impregnate a female guanaco with camel sperm, producing a *Camelus-Lama* hybrid, or "cama"—the first viable hybrid of Old and New World camels. Rama the cama, born on the day of the full moon during Ramadan, is so far the only creature of his kind. He has the woolly coat and the nose and nostrils of his mother, and the short ears and long tail of his father. His feet are a blend of the camel's two-toed conjoined footpad and the

guanaco's cloven hoof. He is large but lacks a hump. Whether he is fertile will not be known for several years.

"It must be lonely, being him," I said to one of the frozen-sperm researchers, the young woman from Cambridge, as we watched Rama kick his soccer ball. She said, "Being a new species, you mean? He doesn't know it, though, does he? He thinks he's just like the rest of us." Behind us, in the examining bay, a camel's insistent moan acquired a tone of mild urgency as Skidmore pumped up a catheter balloon to plug the cervix. The camel guys grunted and leaned into the animal to keep it still. A tinny bar of "Whistle While You Work" somehow made itself heard.

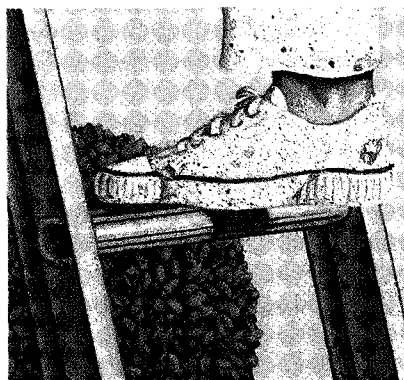
The line on Sheikh Mohammed is that camel racing may have enticed him into the research field, but a broader view of camel science is why he stays. If the objective had been merely to learn how to pop out scores of healthy embryos from the very best camels, then the objective could be considered achieved, in Dubai and elsewhere. But at the Camel Reproduction Centre other investigations go on—into placentation, luteolysis, and cloning, for example. The ability to freeze camel semen and camel embryos probably won't have a big payoff at Nad al Sheba, but it could be crucial in revitalizing and improving genetic stocks elsewhere in the world, and in selecting for traits other than speed. Every year Skidmore brings in veterinarians from Kenya and Tunisia, from Mauritania and Ethiopia and elsewhere in the Third World, for a week-long training course—the Dubai equivalent of the Department of Agriculture's extension service. It's not entirely preposterous to imagine that we are in the process of creating a planet whose ecosystem will call rather urgently for what *Camelus dromedarius* has to offer.

Lulu Skidmore raised that possibility one afternoon as we sat in her office at the Dubai Camel Hospital. A room nearby holds a video library of all the camel races held at Nad al Sheba during the past decade, and I had watched enough for a lifetime. Through the half-open door of Skidmore's office I had a view of the bleached camel skeleton that stands guard over the hospital lobby.

"We could do a lot of good for other countries where they really do need the camels for meat," Skidmore said. "Where they really do need them for milk. Where they desperately need them for transport. Worldwide, camels are becoming a much more important animal, as we kill off our environment by building everything up and draining the water out and pulling up trees. Before long a lot of the world is going to be desert—the desert is enlarging all the time. Camels will be one animal that can survive all this. We'll be farming camels instead of cattle and sheep. At the end of the day they're going to be a lifesaver."

Skidmore laughed. "Global warming," she said, "could be very good for me and my camels." ☞

Some of the illustrations in this article are based on photographs by Florine de Haas van Dorsser.



Closure and Roadkill on the Life's Highway

by WILLIAM GAY

RAYMER had been working at the housing project for more than a month, and during this time the little old man had consistently moved with the sun. Raymer had begun work during the chill days of a blackberry winter, and the man had shuttled his chair as each day progressed, claiming the thin, watery light as if he drew sustenance from it. Now it was well into June, and at some point the man had shifted into reverse, moving counterclockwise for the shade but always positioning his lawn chair where he could watch Raymer work.

Raymer hardly noticed him, for he was in more pain than he had thought possible. He could scarcely get through the day. He was amazed that hearts could actually ache, actually break. Secretly he suspected that his had been defective, already faulted, a secondhand or rebuilt heart, for it had certainly not held up as well as he had expected it to. Corrie, who had been his childhood sweetheart before she became his wife, had inserted the point of a chisel into the fault line and tapped it once lightly with a hammer, and that was the end of that.

By trade he was a painter, and some days he was conscious only of the aluminum extension ladder through his tennis shoes and the brush at the end of his extended arm, which leaned out, and out, as if gravity were just a bothersome rumor, as if he were leaning to paint the very void that yawned to engulf him.

When Raymer came down to move the ladder, the old

man was waiting for him at the foot of it holding a glass of iced tea in his hand. He was a wizened little man who did not even come to Raymer's shoulder. He had washed-out eyes of the palest blue, and the tip of his nose looked as if, sometime long ago, it had been sliced off neatly with a pocket knife. He was wearing a canvas porkpie hat that had half a dozen trout flies hooked through the band, and he was dressed in flip-flops, faded blue jeans, and an old Twisted Sister T-shirt.

"My name's Mayfield. Drink this tea before you get too hot."

Raymer took the glass of tea as you'd take a pill a doctor ordered you to, and stood holding it as if he did not know what to do with it.

"Then you'll do it?"

Raymer asked.

"I'll think about it,"

Corrie said.

"It's a lot of money."

She paused.

"There's just one
thing."

"Drink it up before that ice melts. You don't talk much, do you?"

"What?"

"You don't have much to say."

"Well, I work by myself. Folks might think me peculiar if I was having long conversations."

"I mean you ain't very friendly. You don't exactly invite conversation."

"I just have all this work to do."

"Who do you work for?"

Raymer sipped the tea. It was sweet and strong, and the glass was full of shaved ice. A sprig of mint floated on top, and he crushed it between his teeth. "I work for myself," he said.

"I been watchin' you ever since you come out here. You're right agile on that ladder. Move around like you was on solid ground. How old a feller are you?"

"I'm twenty-four," Raymer said, chewing the mint, its taste as evocative as a hallucinogenic drug, reminding him of something but he could not have said what. "Where'd you get that T-shirt?"

"It was in some stuff that my daughter left when she married," Mayfield said. "You ever do any bluff-climbin'?"

"Any what?"

"Bluff-climbin'. Climbin' around over these limestone bluffs down by the Tennessee River."

"No."

"I bet you could, though. I used to do it when I was a hell of a lot older than twenty-four. I can't do it now, though—my joints has got stiff, and my bones are as brittle as glass."

"I'm sorry," Raymer said, feeling an obscure need to apologize for infirmities of age he hadn't caused. He was thinking of Corrie the last time he'd seen her, thinking of her hands pushing against his chest.

"It ain't your fault. Listen, I got somethin' I need a coat of paint on. You stop by when you knock off work this evenin', and I'll show it to you."

"Well, I don't know. I push myself pretty hard. I'm usually about worn out by the end of the day."

"It ain't much, and I ain't lookin' to get it done for nothin'. I'll pay you."

"If I'm not too tired."

"The main thing is I want to talk to you. I've got a business proposition for you."

Raymer drained the glass and handed it to the old man. He began repositioning the ladder. "I'll see at quitting time," he said.

He made it through the day, and when he was behind the apartment building, washing his brushes, he thought he might make it to his truck and escape without painting whatever it was the old man wanted painted. He wanted to go home to the empty house and sit in the dark and think about Corrie. But Mayfield was a wily old man and had anticipated him. He was leaning against the front of Raymer's truck when Raymer

came around the building with his brushes in his hand. He had one flip-flop cocked on the bumper and was leaning against the grille with an elbow propped on the hood. He wasn't much taller than the hood of the truck. "I'll show you that thing now," he said. "It's over on the porch of my apartment."

Raymer didn't even know what it was. It appeared to be a sort of flattened-out concrete lion. Its paws were outstretched, and its eyes looked crossed or rolled back in its head. It looked like an animal on which something had fallen from an enormous height, flattening its back and leaving a rectangular cavity.

"What the hell is it?"

"It's a homemade planter, of course. It was my wife's. It's all I've got left after fifty years of marriage, all I have to remember her by."

Raymer gazed at the sorry-looking thing. It seemed precious little to have salvaged from fifty years of marriage, but he guessed it was more than he had.

"What color you want it? Paint won't stay on that concrete anyway, not out here in the weather."

"I ain't worried about the weather—that thing'll be on this porch longer than I will. Paint it red, brighten things up around here."

While Raymer painted it red, the old man told him a tale.

"I was watchin' the way you get around on that ladder," he began. "You ain't got no fear of heights. That ladder must run out forty foot, and you never make a misstep. Course it wouldn't take but one, and that'd be all of you. I was thinkin' about them bluffs down on the Tennessee River. Down there below Clifton. I bet a young man like you wouldn't have no trouble climbin' up to some caves I know of on them bluffs."

Raymer was barely listening. While he was painting the lion, he was replaying a loop of tape in his head of Corrie telling him about the emptiness in her life. What's the matter? he had asked, but whatever was the matter was so evasive and intangible that it couldn't be pinned down with a word. No word was precise or subtle enough to explain it. We never have enough money, but it's not really about money, she had said. He had dropped out of college so that Corrie could finish nursing school. She had dropped out of his life, and the bottom had dropped out of everything. My life is empty, she said, before she packed her bags and rented an apartment in Maury County. He didn't know what kind of emptiness, or what had been removed to cause it, but the space must have been sizable, because she had found a six-foot-four guitarist in a country band to fill it. The guitarist's name was Robbie, and he had a wild mane of curly red hair and a predatory, foxlike face.

"Hell, he's not even good-looking," Raymer had told her. "He looks like a Goddamned fox."

"Like a what?"

"Like a fox. A red fox. That sharp nose, all that red fur. Hair. Hell, I'm better-looking than he is."

"You're very good-looking, Buddy. You're a lot better-

looking than he is—but life's not always about looks, is it?"

"You a married man?" Mayfield asked.

"She quit me," Raymer said, putting the finishing touches on the lion.

"I bet ten thousand dollars would put things in a whole other light," Mayfield said.

"It wasn't really about money."

"It's never about money, but still, a few thousand dollars would fix a lot of things right up. Smooth things over, round off a lot of sharp corners. She got another man?"

Raymer was growing uncomfortable talking about it. Thinking about it. "Not until after she left," he said carefully.

"I bet she had him picked out beforehand, though."

Raymer laid the brush aside. "You do? What the hell do you know about it? What is it to you anyway?"

"I know I'm seventy-five years old, and I ain't went through life blindfolded. I know you're pretty down in the mouth, and I know there's nearly twenty thousand dollars in that cave I was tellin' you about. I put it there myself, a long time ago. You can't even get to it from the top, from the bluff side. You got to get up to it from the river. A little over nineteen thousand dollars, to be exact."

"A little over nineteen thousand is not exact," Raymer said.

"Nineteen thousand seven hundred something, then," Mayfield said. "At that time Alabama was dry for beer. Dry as a chip. I lived right across the state line then. I had two coolers on my back porch and didn't sell nothin' but tallboy Bud. Sunday afternoons in the summertime you could stand in my front yard and look up the highway and the line of cars windin' around my house looked like it went on forever. You'd wonder where all them cars come from. Where they went. I had a beer truck comin' from Tennessee twice a week. I was payin' off everybody from county judges to dogcatchers, and still I was hooked up to a money machine. I didn't drink, like most bootleggers. I didn't gamble. What was I goin' to do with all that money? Put it in the bank? Mail it to the IRS? I was makin' money faster than I could spend it, and I was never a slacker when it come to spendin' money. We had a daughter in a finishin' school in Atlanta, Georgia, and we was drivin' matchin' Lincoln Continentals. I was accumulatin' it in fruit jars, paper sacks. The money kept growin' all the time."

"Why didn't you just bury it?" Raymer asked, as if he believed any of this.

"I did, but folks was always slippin' around and tryin' to dig it up. They took to watchin' me in shifts. They knew I had money. I had to get it somewheres nobody prowled around. I was thinkin' in terms of a sort of retirement fund. Then I come in this part of the country and found that cave. You can barely see it from the river, much less get into it. Nobody had been in there in a hell of a time. Some skeletons were in there, and old guns. Swords. I've got one of them I'll show you. It was a old Civil War cave."

"Let's see it," Raymer said, interested in spite of himself.

The sword was wrapped in what looked like an old tablecloth. The old man unfolded the oilcloth and held up the sword for Raymer to see. Raymer was expecting something polished and lethal, but the steel had a dull patina of time, and it seemed to draw light into itself instead of reflecting it.

"It's one of them old CSA officer's swords, ain't it?" the man said.

"I really wouldn't know one from a meat cleaver, but I guess it is if you say it is. It's certainly some kind of sword. What else was in there?"

"Belt buckles. Rusty guns. Bones, like I said. Further back there was different kinds of bones, arrowheads, and clay pots. That place was old. I ain't no zoologist or nothin', but them was Indian bones."

"Hellfire," Raymer said. "I thought you needed someplace nobody knew about. It sounds like folks were just tripping over each other to get into your cave. It must have been the Grand Central Station of caves."

The old man took the sword back and folded its shroud around it. "Nobody's interested in that kind of stuff anymore," he said. "Everybody's forgot about it. When I was in there, I guess I was the first in seventy-five years. Nobody's been there since—I'd bet on it."

"If you left nineteen thousand dollars in there, you bet pretty high," Raymer observed. "I thought you said you didn't gamble."

Mayfield had not yet turned on the lights in his living room, and behind him the door loomed dark and silent. Raymer thought of his own still house, where he must go.

"I've got to get on," he said. "What happened to your nose?"

"I had plastic surgery. I wanted it this way. I picked this nose out of a book."

"Were you in an accident?"

"No, he did it on purpose. I was in a beer joint over on the Wayne County line. Goblin's Knob. This big farmer off of Beech Creek set on me and held me down and cut the end off of it with a pocket knife."

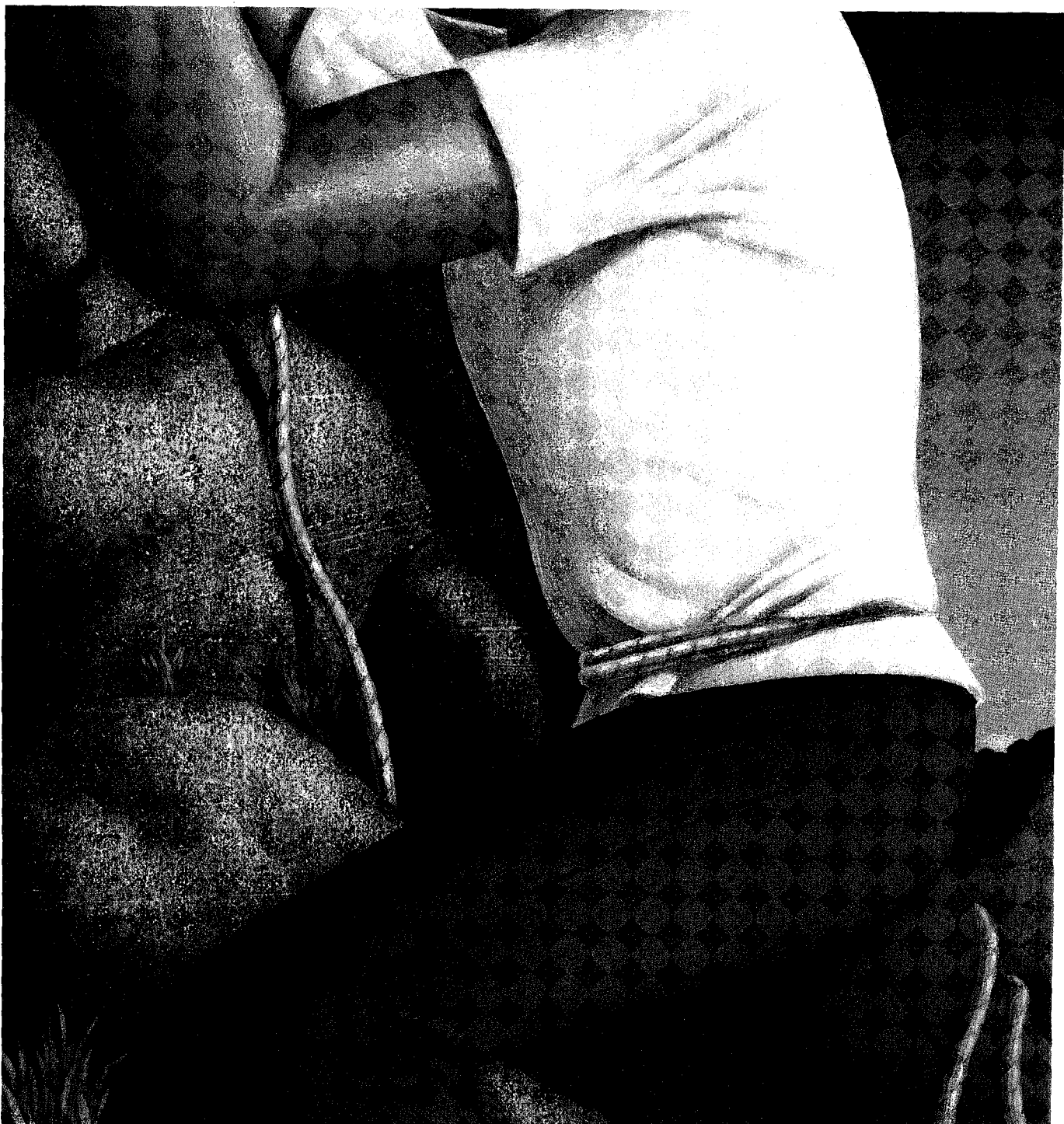
"Jesus Christ."

"No, he was a Pulley. He disappeared right after that. Nobody ever knew what became of him. I believe he's in a dry cistern with his throat cut and rocks piled down on him. What do you think?"

"I think I can feel you pulling on my leg again."

"Maybe. Maybe not."

SIX weeks after she left, he had seen her in a mall, coming out of a JCPenney. She had had her hair shorn away and what was left dyed a glossy black. She was slim and graceful, and she looked like the willowy child he had grown up with. He walked along beside her. Standing by a wishing pool where coins gleamed from the depths, and with a brick wall hard against her back, he kissed her mouth



until she twisted her face away. Let me alone, she said. What are you trying to do?

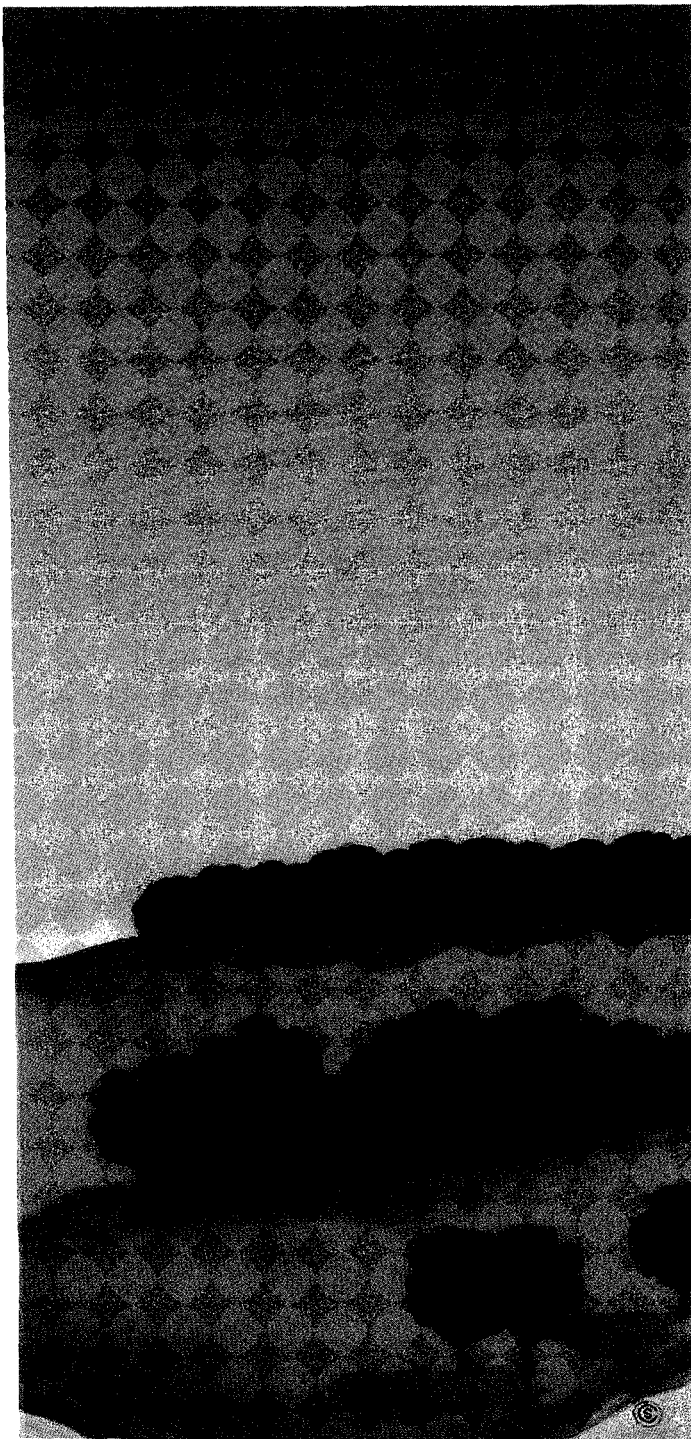
He was still holding her. He could feel the delicate framework of bones beneath her flesh. Like a rabbit, a fawn, like something small. I'm trying to save our marriage, he said.

She shook her head. This marriage is shot, she said quietly. A team of paramedics couldn't save it. This marriage wound up roadkill on the life's highway.

On the life's highway, Raymer repeated in wonder. You've been helping Robbie with his country lyrics, haven't you?

She was pushing harder against him, but he was still holding her. His arms wouldn't release. When they finally did, they hung limply at his sides, like appendages he hadn't learned the use of. She was looking into his eyes. Was she about to cry? Maybe. Maybe not. She turned away, and he didn't follow.

Corrie lived in an apartment complex near the college where she was learning to be a nurse. He had been there a time or two before she took up with the country musician. Tonight her light was out. Early to bed, early to rise. Robbie owned an



old green Camaro, and Raymer drove around the parking lot until he found it. Then he got back on the interstate and drove toward home.

IT'S in a five-gallon vinegar jar," Mayfield said. "What in the world would a person ever do with five gallons of vinegar?" Raymer said.

"They'd make a lot of pickles. Anyway, that's where it's at. I started out with fruit jars, but they were too hard to keep up

with. I figured, keep all my eggs in one basket. If the weather clears up, we might do it this weekend. I believe it'd do you good to get your mind off that girl that quit you. We might fish a little. You get down on that river, you'll be all right."

"I never said I believed any of this tale. And I damn sure never said I'd do it."

"You never said you wouldn't. We'll split right down the middle, half and half. I'd even give you the even ten."

Raymer was sitting on Mayfield's porch, a porch stanchion against his back, drinking from a warming bottle of beer and watching rain string off the roof. A sudden squall had blown in from the southwest, and Mayfield had been standing there in the rain waiting for him before he had his ladders and tools stored away. Now Mayfield was rocking in the porch swing, and for some time he studied Raymer in silence.

"What you're doin' is draggin' this out way too far," he said. "You're a likely young feller. Not too bad-lookin'. You need to get over it. Get on to the next thing. You need some kind of closure."

"Closure?" Raymer was grinning. "Where did you hear that? Was relationship therapy part of the bootlegging trade when you followed it?"

"I heard it on TV. I got no way of gettin' out anywhere. I watch a lot of TV. Them talk shows—they shrinks and social workers are always talkin' about closure. Closure this, closure that. I figure you need some. You need somethin' for sure. You got a look about you like you don't care whether you live or die, and maybe you'd a little rather die. I've seen that look on folks before, and I don't care for it. It ain't healthy."

Raymer was thinking that maybe the old man was right. He did need something, and closure was as good a word for it as anything else. Everything had just been so damned polite. She had not even raised her voice. Just I'm going, good-bye, don't leave the light on for me. If only she had done something irrevocable, something he couldn't forget, something so bad she couldn't take it back. Something that would cauterize the wound like a red-hot iron.

"Did it have a metal lid, this famous jug?"

"What?"

"If it did, after twenty years in a wet cave the lid's rusted away and the money's just a mildewed mess of rotten goop. A biological stew of all the germs that came off all the people who ever handled it. Fermenting all these years."

"I never heard such rubbish. Anyway, I'm way ahead of you. The money's wrapped in plastic, and I melted paraffin in a cooker and sealed it with a couple of inches of that. Like women used to seal jelly."

This silenced Raymer, and he took a sip of beer and sat watching Mayfield bemusedly. After a while he set his bottle aside. He seemed to have made up his mind about something.

"Do you believe in God?" he asked.

"Do what? Of course I do. Don't you?"

"Do you own a Bible?"

"I believe there's one in there somewhere."

"Go get it."

Mayfield was in the house for some time. Raymer watched staccato lightning flicker in the west out of tumorous storm clouds. Thunder rumbled like something heavy and ungainly rolling down an endless corridor, faint and fainter. When Mayfield came out, he had a worn Bible covered in black leath-
erette. He held it out to Raymer.

"Did you want to read a psalm or two?" he asked.

Raymer didn't take the Bible. "Do you swear you're telling me the truth about that money?" he asked.

The old man looked amused, as if he'd won some obscure point of honor. He laid the Bible in the seat of the lawn chair and placed his palm on it. "I swear I hid a vinegar jar with nineteen thousand seven hundred dollars in it in a cave down on the Tennessee River."

Raymer figured he might as well cover all the contingencies. "And as far as I know, it's still there," he said.

"And as far as I know, it's still there," Mayfield repeated.

IT was never about money, Corrie had said, but Raymer thought perhaps it had been about money after all. Corrie had been happiest when they had money to spend, and she fell into long silences when it grew tight. The happiest he had seen her was when they bought an old farmhouse to remodel. But everything ate up money: mortgage payments, building materials. Anyway, what Corrie seemed to enjoy was the act of spending, not what she bought.

He had given her a \$300 leather jacket for her twenty-second birthday, and she had left it in a Taco Bell and not even checked on it for a week. Naturally, it was gone. They probably made a lot of others just like it, she said. Somewhere someone Raymer didn't know was wearing his \$300.

IE cut the motor and let the boat drift the last few feet toward shore, rocking slightly on the choppy water. He took a line up from the stern and tossed it over a sweetgum branch. He drew it around and tied it off and just stood for a moment, staring up the face of the bluff. The cliff rose in a sheer vertical that he judged to be almost 200 feet. The opening he was looking at was perhaps thirty feet from the top.

"You went up that thing?"

"I damn sure did. With a five-gallon vinegar jug of money."

"The hell you did."

"The hell I didn't. It's not as steep as it looks."

"It better not be. If it is, Spiderman couldn't get up it with suction cups on his hands and feet. Are you sure it's the right one?"

"I'm almost positive," Mayfield said. He had opened a tackle box and sat with an air of concentration, inspecting its contents. At length he selected a fly and began to tie it to the nylon line on the fishing rod he was holding.

It was ten o'clock on a balmy Saturday morning. They had

already been inside several inlets where the river backwatered and had inspected the bluffs for caves. They had seen two openings that could have been caves, but the openings had not looked right to the old man. Mayfield had brought a cooler of beer and Coca-Colas, a picnic basket filled with sandwiches, his tackle box, a creel, and two fly rods. Raymer had brought only a heavy-duty flashlight and a 200-foot coil of nylon rope, and he was disgusted. "If we had one of those striped umbrellas, we could lollygag on the beach," he said. "If we had a beach."

He began a winding course up the bluff. It was cut with ledges that narrowed as the bluff ascended, and sometimes he was forced to progress from ledge to ledge by wedging his boots in vertical crevices and pushing himself laboriously upward. From time to time he came upon stunted cedars growing out of the fissured rock, but he didn't trust them to hold his weight.

Halfway up, the ledges ceased to be anything more than sloping footholds on the rock face, and he could go no farther. He stood on a narrow ledge not much wider than his shoe soles, hugging the bluff and glancing up. The rest of the bluff looked as sheer and smooth as an enormous section of window glass. "The hell with this," he said. He worked himself down to a wider outcropping and hunkered there with his back against the limestone and his eyes closed. He could feel the hot sun on his eyelids. When he opened them, the world was spread out in a panorama of such magnitude that his head reeled, and for a moment he did not think of Corrie at all.

Everything below him was diminished—a tiny boat with a tiny man casting a line, the inlet joining the rolling river where it gleamed like hammered metal in the sun. Far upstream, toward the ferry, a barge drifted with a load of new cars, their glass and chrome flashing in the sun like a heliograph. Mayfield glanced up to check his progress and waved an encouraging hand. Raymer was seized with an intense loathing, a maniacal urge to throttle the old man and wedge his body under a rock somewhere.

When he reached the base of the cliff, he was wringing wet with sweat. He waded out into the shallow water and got the coil of rope. Mayfield was unhooking a small channel cat and dropping it into his creel.

"What's the trouble?" he said.

Raymer shook his head and did not reply. He lined up the mouth of the cave with a lightning-struck cypress on the white dome of the bluff and went up the riverbank looking for easier climbing. He entered a hollow, topped out on a ridge, and then angled back toward the river looking for the cypress. Finding it seemed to take forever. When he did find it, he tied the end of the rope around its base and dropped the coil over the bluff. Then he hauled thirty or forty feet of rope back up and began to fashion a rough safety line. The idea of swinging back and forth, pendulumlike, across the face of the bluff, dependent on an old man with a fishing pole to rescue him, did not appeal to him, but he tied the rope off anyway. He felt like a fool to the tenth power, and in his heart of hearts he knew he wouldn't find any money.

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His feet reached the opening first, and for a dizzy moment they were climbing on nothingness, pedaling desperately for purchase, until the bottom of the opening connected with his shoes. When he was sure he was safe on solid rock, he unclipped the flashlight from his belt and shone it into the opening. This could not be it. Here was no huge room like the one the old man had described, no dead soldiers or guns, no money. It was not even a proper cave—just cannular limestone walls thick with bat guano, sloping inward toward the dead end of a rock wall. He rested for a time and then clicked off the light and went hand over hand back up the face of the bluff.

When Raymer waded out to the boat and tossed in the rope and the light, Mayfield did not seem concerned. “Likely it’s another bluff,” he said. “All these sloughs get to lookin’ the same, and it’s been upwards of twenty years since I was here. I used to fish all these backwaters when I first come up from Alabama. Now I think on it, it seems the mouth of that cave was just about hid by a cedar. That’s why I picked it to begin with. I never would have found it if I hadn’t been watchin’ a hawk through some field glasses.”

“Then you just deposited your twenty thousand and sat back waiting for the interest to add up.”

“I told you, I didn’t need it. I’d tip a waitress a dollar for a fifty-cent hamburger. I never cared for money.”

“I guess you were just in the bootlegging trade for the service you could render humanity.”

“Right.”

“I wish I had sense like other folks,” Raymer said. “Why does everybody think I just fell off the hay truck?”

“You’ve got that red neck and that slack-jawed country look,” Mayfield said placidly. “And a fool is such a hard thing to resist.”

HE had sent her three dozen American Beauty roses, and the apartment was saturated with their smell. Raymer sat on the couch with his legs crossed and a cup of coffee balanced on his knee and had the closest thing to a conversation he had had with Corrie since the day she left.

“This is so unlike you,” she said. “All these flowers. How much did they cost?”

“They were day-old roses, half off. I told you it didn’t matter.”

“And climbing around in caves looking for hidden treasure. It’s so unpredictable. Who would have thought it of you? Are you having some sort of a crisis?”

Raymer kept glancing around the apartment. He had neither seen Robbie nor heard mention of his name, but the place made him nervous anyway. It was fancier and more expensive-looking than he remembered, and he wondered how she could afford it. Everything looked like a sleek and dynamic symbol for a life he could not aspire to. The furniture was low and curvilinear, as if aerodynamically designed for life in the fast lane.

“He’s almost certainly senile,” she said. “What makes you think he’s telling you the truth?”

“I know he’s telling the truth. He’s religious, and he laid his hand on the Bible, and . . . Wait a minute—quit that. It may be funny to you, but he took it seriously.”

“‘Religious’ and ‘bootlegger’ just sort of seem contradictory terms to me.”

“I’m not going to argue semantics. The point is, he’s telling the truth. I even drove down below the state line and talked to some folks who used to know him. He was a bootlegger, and he was successful enough at it to have socked away twenty thousand dollars without missing it. That’s ten thousand for me. Us, if I can talk you into it. We could just spend it, just piss it away. Buy things. Go on a cruise. I’m making money for us to live on, and I’ve got more work to do.”

She gave him a sharp look of curiosity. “What’s in it for you?”

“You. If you’ll give me a chance, I’ll win you back. By the time we spend ten thousand dollars, I can persuade you to give it another shot.”

“We gave it a four-year shot. It wasn’t working.”

“I’ll try harder.”

“Oh, Buddy. If you tried any harder, you’d break something. Rupture all your little springs or something. It wasn’t you. It was just a bad idea—although you did make it worse. You’re such an innocent about things. You get a picture of things in your head and your picture is all you see. You don’t know me. You don’t even know yourself. All you know is your little picture of how things ought to be, and that’s the way you think they are.”

“Well, whatever. Ten thousand dollars is still a lot of money.”

She didn’t argue with that. “Wouldn’t it be fun to go down to the Bahamas? I’m on summer break. We could lie on the beach. All that white sand. We could just lie in the sun and drink those tall drinks they have with tropical fruit in them.”

“Then you’ll do it?”

“I’ll think about it. Like you said, it’s a lot of money.” She paused, and was silent for a time. “There’s just one thing,” she said.

“Where’s the fox at?”

“Robbie? He’s playing a string of club dates in Nashville, trying to get a record deal. By the way, you shouldn’t call him that—it just shows how petty you are. I told him about it, and he wasn’t amused.”

“Piss on him. I never set out to be a comedian.”

“Back to what I was saying. The way you tell it, you’re doing all the work. Swinging around on those bluffs—that’s dangerous. You could get killed. I’m only twenty-three, and I could be a widow. I think you deserve the entire twenty thousand.”

“Hellfire, Corrie, it’s Mayfield’s money, not mine.”

“You said yourself he doesn’t care about it. Besides, it would take twice as long to spend it. If you’re really trying to, as you put it, win me back, this would give you twice as long to do it.”

Raymer was put off balance by what she’d suggested, and he felt a little dizzy. He thought the smell of the roses might be getting to him. The room was filled with a sickening sweet

reek that seemed to have soaked into the draperies and the carpet. It smelled like a wedding, a funeral. "You may be right," he said.

"Of course I'm right. You could take six months off from work. We could spend it remodeling the house. Maybe you're learning, Buddy. You did right to tell me this."

"I could tell you about it all night long," Raymer said. He'd heard that money was an aphrodisiac, but he suspected this was more likely to be true of actual as opposed to conjectural money, and Corrie's reply bore this out.

"I've got to think all this through," she said. "I've got to decide what I'm going to tell Robbie."

At the door she kissed him hard and opened her mouth under his and rounded her sharp breasts against his chest, but her mouth did not taste the same as it had that day by the wishing pool, and the odor of the roses had even saturated her hair. An enormous sadness settled over him.

Going back, he was five miles across the county line when a small red fox darted up out of the weedy ditch and streaked into his headlights. He cut the wheel hard to miss it, but a rear wheel passed over the fox, and he felt a lurch in the pit of his stomach. "Goddamn it," he said. He put the truck in reverse and backed up until he could see the fox. It wasn't moving. He got out. The fox's eyes were open, but they were blind and dull; its sharp little teeth were bared, and blood was running out of its mouth. Its eyes had been as bright as emeralds in the headlights, and they had gleamed as if they emitted light instead of reflecting it. "I don't believe this," Raymer said. "This is just too Goddamned much."

He rose and took a drop cloth from the bed of the truck and wrapped the fox in it. He stowed it in the back of the pickup and drove on toward home.

RAYMER was shaking his head. "Why don't you just admit it?" he asked. "You wanted to go fishing. You wanted to get away from the project and picnic on the river. So you fed me all this bullshit, and here you are, with your little basket and your little fishing pole."

Mayfield regarded him placidly. "It don't matter what you think," he said. "The money's not there because you think it is. It's there because I put it in a jar and poured paraffin over it and packed it up the side of that bluff. If you think it's not there, that don't change nothin'. It'd be there even if you didn't exist."

"Because you packed it up the side of that bluff."

"Right."

Raymer sat in the stern of the boat looking at his hands. He had slipped twenty scary feet down the face of a bluff before he could stop himself, and the nylon line had left a deep rope burn across each palm, as if he'd grabbed a red-hot welding rod with both hands.

Truth to tell, though, exploring the caves was interesting. He had not found any dead Confederates, but he had been in a

cave in whose winding depths Indians had left flint chippings, pottery shards, all that remained of themselves.

As always, Mayfield seemed to know what he was thinking. "Why won't you admit it yourself? You know you're gettin' a kick out of it. I bet you ain't thought of your wife all mornin'."

Raymer shook his head again. He grinned. "You're just too many for me," he said.

THURSDAY he was rained out in midafternoon, and he drove to the bank and checked the balance in his account. It was a lot higher than he had expected. He was amazed at how little he had spent. Like the old man, he seemed to be accumulating it in paper sacks, fruit jars. It was growing all the time.

He asked to withdraw \$500 in ones and fives. The teller gave him a peculiar look as she began to count out the money.

"It's for a ransom note," Raymer said, and for a moment she stopped counting. She was careful to keep any look at all from her face. Then she resumed, laying one bill atop another.

He drank the rest of the day away in a bar near the bypass. The place was named Oktoberfest and had a mock-Germanic decor, and the waitresses were tricked out in what looked like milkmaids' costumes. He drank dark lager and kept waiting for the ghost of Hitler to sidle in and take the stool across from him. A dull malaise had seized him. A sense of doom. A suspicion that someone close to him had died but he had not yet received the telegram, that the Reaper was walking up and down the block looking for his house number.

"You've sure got a good tan," the barmaid told him. "It looks great with that blond hair. What are you, a lifeguard or something?"

"Something," Raymer said. "I'm a necrozoologist."

"A what? Necrowhat?"

"A necrozoologist. I analyze roadkill on the highways. On the life's highway. I look for patterns, migratory habits. Compile statistics. So many foxes, so many skunks. Possums. Try to determine where the animal was bound for when it was struck."

"There's no such thing as that."

"Sure there is. We're funded by the government. We get grants."

She laid a palm on his forearm. "I think you're drunk," she said. "But you're cute anyway. Stop by and see me one day when you're sober."

When he went to use the pay phone, he was surprised to see that dark had fallen. He could see the interstate from there, and the headlights of cars streaking past looked straight and intent, like falling stars rifling down the night.

The phone rang for a long time before she answered.

"Where were you?"

"I was asleep on the couch. Where are you? Why are you calling?"

"I've got it," he said.

"Jesus, Buddy. You found it? All of it?"

"All of it."

"You sound funny. Why do you sound like that? Are you drunk?"

"I might have had a few celebratory—celebratory—beers."

"If you were going to celebrate, you could have waited for me."

"I'm waiting for you now," he said, and hung up the phone.

A CHEST freezer stood on the back porch of the farmhouse they had bought to renovate. Raymer raised the lid and took out the frozen fox, still wrapped in its canvas shroud. He folded away the canvas, but part of it was seized in the bloody ice, and he refolded it. He slid the bundle into a clean five-gallon paint bucket. A vinegar jar would have been nice, but he guessed they didn't make them that big anymore. The money was in a sack, and he dumped it into the bucket, shaking the bag out, the ones and fives drifting like dry leaves in a listless wind. He glanced at his watch and then picked up the loose bills from the floor and packed them around the fox. He stretched a piece of plastic taut across the top of the bucket and sealed it with duct tape. He replaced the plastic lid and hammered it home with a fist. Then he went into the kitchen and filled up the coffee maker.

When headlights washed the walls of the house, he was sitting at the kitchen table drinking a cup of coffee. By the time he had crossed to the front room and turned on the porch light, Corrie was standing at the front door with an overnight bag in her hand.

She came in looking around the room, the high, unfinished ceiling. "Looks like you quit on it," she said.

"I guess I sort of drifted into the doldrums after you left," he said. "Is that bag all you brought?"

"I figured we could buy some new stuff in the morning. Where is it? I want to see it."

He'd expected that. He pried off the lid and showed her. He'd been working on the wiring in the living room, and the light was poor here. She was looking intently, but all it looked like was a bucket full of money.

"Can we dump it out and count it? I thought it was in some kind of glass jar."

"The jar was broken. I think a rock slid on it. If he hadn't had the whole mess airtight in plastic, it would probably have been worthless. I've already counted it, and we're not going to roll around in it or do anything crazy. I still don't feel right about this, and we're leaving for Key West early in the morning, before I change my mind. I can see that old man's face every time I close my eyes."

"Whatever you say, Buddy. Five gallons of money sure has made you decisive and take-charge. It looks good on you."

Later he lay on his back in bed and watched her disrobe. "You don't have to do this," he said. "We don't have to rush things."

"I want to rush things," she said, reaching behind to unclasp her brassiere.

Raymer's mind was in turmoil. There was just too much to understand. He wondered if he would ever drive confidently down what Corrie had called the life's highway, piloting a sleek car five miles over the limit instead of standing by the road with his collar turned up and his thumb in the air. There were too many variables—the rates of change and exchange were out of balance. The removal of Corrie's clothing was to her a casual act, all out of proportion to the torrent of feelings it caused in him. Her apartment was less than forty miles away, but it was no-man's-land, off limits. She had laid stones in the pathway which had driven him to a despair that not even the sweet length of her body laid against his would counterbalance.

An hour or so after he should have been asleep, he heard her call him. "Buddy?" When he didn't answer, she rose, slowly so that the bed would not creak. She crossed the floor to the bathroom. He could hear the furtive sounds of her dressing, the whisper of fabric on fabric. Then nothing, and though his eyes were still closed, he knew that she was standing in the bathroom door watching him. He lay breathing in, breathing out. He heard her take up the bucket and turn with it, and the bucket banged the doorjamb. "Goddamn," she breathed. Then he heard the soft sounds of bare feet and nothing further, not even the opening and closing of the front door, before her car cranked.

It was hot and stale in the room. It smelled like attar of roses, like climate-controlled money from the depths of a cave, like a rotting fox in the high white noon.

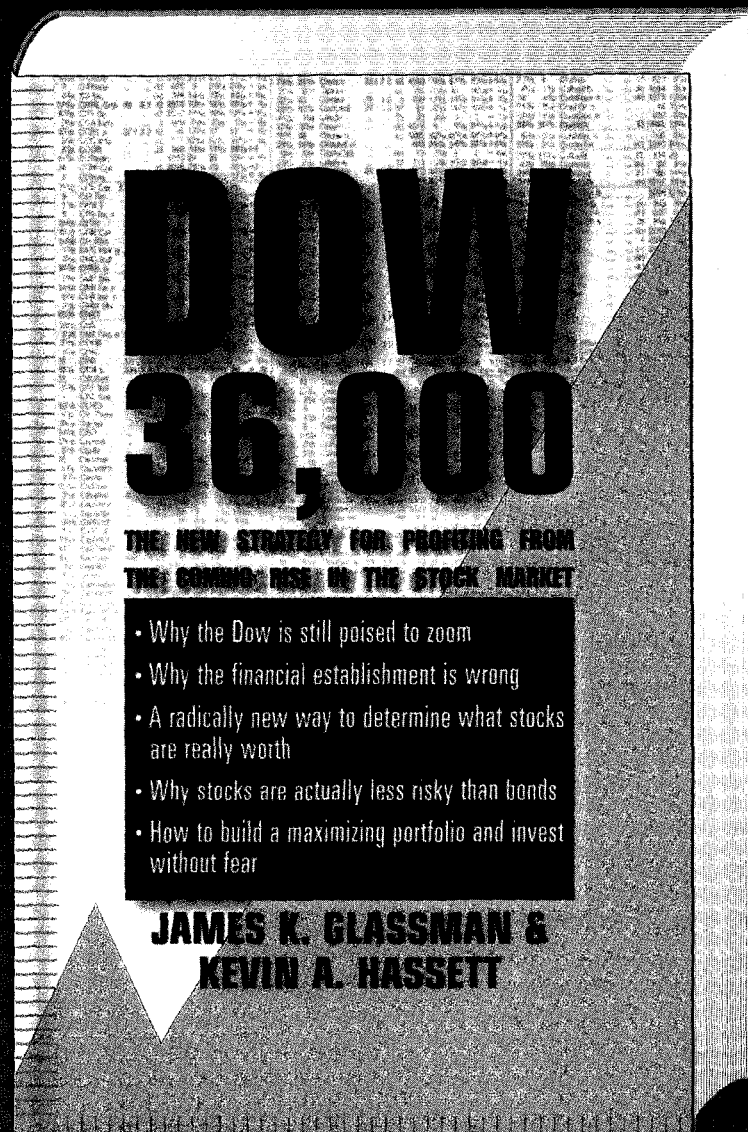
He got up and raised a window. Night rushed in like balm to his sweating skin. She hadn't even closed the front door. The yard lay empty and still and so awash with moonlight that it appeared almost theatrical, like the setting arranged for a dream that was over, or one on which the curtain had not yet risen.

When he crawled back into bed, he lay in the damp spot where they had made love, but he felt nothing. No pleasure, no pain. It was just a wet spot on a bed, and he moved over and thought about getting up and changing the sheets. But he didn't. He was weary and, despite all the coffee, still a little drunk. He tried to think of Corrie's lips against his throat, but all his mind would hold on to was the hiss in her voice when the bucket banged the door. Then even that slid away, and on the edge of sleep a boat was rocking on sun-dappled water, an old man was changing the fly on his line, and Raymer was feeling the sun hot on his back and wondering, Would you really lay your hand on the Bible and swear a lie? The old man's face was inscrutable, as always, but somehow Raymer didn't think he would, and when he slipped into sleep, it was dreamless and untroubled. ☞

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Old-New Bluegrass

Steve Earle draws on the surprisingly recent roots of bluegrass to make pleasingly extreme music

THE *Mountain* is a joyful and accomplished new CD by the songwriter, singer, and instrumentalist Steve Earle. In the mid-1980s Earle was briefly cast as a young hope of Nashville country music. He soon disconcerted Nashville's music establishment by taking seriously the rock, blues, and folk elements in 1980s country radio, and by using them to make music of restless intensity. In the late 1990s Earle has come into his own as a sort of ferocious dean of the music that its fans loosely call "roots." On *Train a Comin'*, released in 1995, he set electric guitars aside and used unamplified instruments. On *The Mountain*, Earle takes that tendency to a logical and beautiful conclu-

by William Hogeland

sion, playing his songs with the accompaniment of the Del McCoury Band, a standard-bearer of contemporary bluegrass.

Because Earle's songs tell old-fashioned stories, with beginnings, middles, and ends, the early ones would have passed for Nashville product if they hadn't so palpably evoked youthful self-destruction. You would never call Earle's charismatic, rasping drawl a country-and-western singing voice, but you could call it either a rock or a folk voice with equal accuracy. Crooned (sort of) to strings or blasted through amps, Earle's music insists on directness; for all its lack of pretension, his music has always felt pleasingly extreme.

Liner notes for *The Mountain*, and the

way the album was marketed to the press and the public, have made it easy to define simply as "Steve Earle's bluegrass album"—the consummation of Earle's attraction to classic country music. But *The Mountain* isn't what would now be called a classic bluegrass album. There hasn't been much like *The Mountain* on record since the 1940s.

EARLE'S liner notes make clear that when he calls *The Mountain* a bluegrass album, he doesn't mean a bluegrass-inspired rock album, or a "newgrass" or "groovegrass" or "new acoustic" album. Working with the Del McCoury Band, Earle taps a style of bluegrass neither frozen in the past nor experimenting with the future but simply played, without drums, on mandolins, banjos, guitars, fiddles, and upright basses. It's the kind of music that attracts intermittent attention from hipsters but gets its real support from middle-American families—including some who travel every summer from festival to festival, camping in RVs and gathering in parking lots for informal picking sessions. Festival bluegrass is virtually worshipped as more than music—a medium for fellowship, an escape from shallowness and insincerity in modern life. Most bluegrass bands lack, to put it mildly, the swing and polish of the Del McCoury Band, but such is the devotion of festival fans that they will cheer the umpteenth band's close-enough harmony singing and predictable breakneck soloing through yet another rendition of "Footprints in the Snow." The air of religious camp meeting that pervades the festivals has been widely noted—it's inescapable. The scene is reminiscent, too, in its communality, of a G-rated Woodstock.

Earle expresses the reverence common among festival-bluegrass fans for Bill Monroe, the "Father of Bluegrass." Monroe, a singer, mandolinist, songwriter, and bandleader who began his professional career in the late 1920s and died in 1996, is widely credited with having created a new and seminal form that kept country music true to its rustic origins and fended off the depredations of slick commerciality. He was a disciplined and adventurous musician and an imposing, laconic figure who seemed, despite having come from western Kentucky, to have been carved from

Appalachian granite. That he "single-handedly," as Earle says in his liner notes, "invented" a new form of music, and that, as some have suggested, the music he played is uniquely close to country music's true sources are exaggerations at best. But they help to illuminate the unusual virtues of *The Mountain*.

Until 1945 Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys (the name referred not to a style of music but to Monroe's home state) was one of many bands playing the music called first hillbilly and later country and western. Some, like Roy Acuff and His Smoky Mountain Boys, were stars; others, like Da Costa Woltz's Southern Broadcasters, were obscure. The most successful bands of the 1930s and 1940s were in effect variety shows that drew on blues, boogie, jazz, Anglo-American balladry, Appalachian fiddle tunes, southern church singing, Victorian sentimental song, minstrelsy, dancing, and cornpone comedy. Monroe's lead singing, based on hymn-singing techniques he had learned in his youth, had a piercing presence. Instrumentation was, naturally, eclectic: an accordion would annoy fans of classic bluegrass today, but Monroe relied on it for some of his best early-1940s recordings. At times he also incorporated spoons, jug, and harmonica.

In a superb 1930s duet act with his brother Charlie, Monroe had begun developing an unusually fluid mandolin style. Inspired in part by the country-jazz hybrid called western swing, Monroe and his musicians sometimes took turns playing lead and made virtuoso displays in "Blue Grass Special" and similar numbers.

The Blue Grass Boys had catholicity and showmanship in common with other popular bands. Like other bands, they employed their strengths to great effect on Nashville's *Grand Ole Opry* radio broadcast; but their sound was narrowed to a set of instantly recognizable "bluegrass" signatures only after the arrival in 1945 of the banjoist Earl Scruggs.

Earl Scruggs brought to the Blue Grass Boys a loud, rapid-fire banjo style that raised the instrument from the drowned-out state to which it had been consigned in most hillbilly bands, amazed listeners, and spawned imitators. Scruggs and the singer-guitarist Lester Flatt left the Blue Grass Boys in 1948 and popularized many of the formulas that, when adopted by a host of others (including Monroe himself, who hired a banjoist to play in Scruggs's

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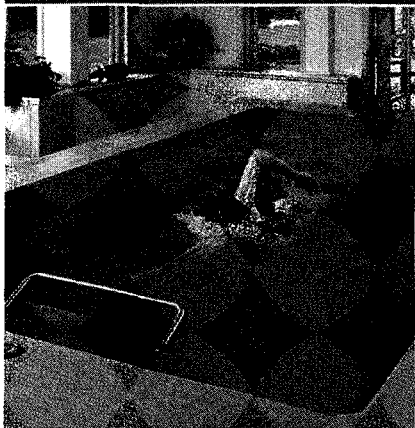
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style), became indelibly associated with classic bluegrass: vocal harmony that while retaining a powerful tension in the tenor is smooth, even suave, compared with Monroe's singing of the early 1940s; soloists' stylized movements toward and away from a single microphone (a thick-et of instrument necks could, if mishandled, take out someone's eye); and a trick known as the Lester Flatt G-run, in which an instrument concludes its solo break with a strong bass figure—an unmistakable trademark of classic bluegrass.

This distinctive sound—inspired by the Blue Grass Boys, codified by Flatt and Scruggs, and developed by the Stanley Brothers and other bands—began to be called bluegrass in the 1950s. Western swing, honky-tonk, and rockabilly were using drums and electrified instruments; some fans and artists insisted that unamplified instruments, gospel-style vocals, and ruralist lyrics made bluegrass the only true country music. Despite its appeal to traditionalists, however, by the early 1960s bluegrass was heard only rarely on country radio—and then mainly as a novelty. Today's thriving bluegrass culture can be traced to the discovery of bluegrass in the late 1950s by collegiate folk revivalists, many of whom were first attracted by the excitement of Scruggs-style banjo. Jazz sophisticates appreciated bluegrass's virtuoso picking, and folk archaists endorsed its unamplified instrumentation and simple structures. Country music was an unattractively big business, and left-inclined folkies could see bluegrass as anti-commercial. Flatt and Scruggs had a success at the Newport Folk Festival in 1960; in 1962 they recorded a well-received live album at Carnegie Hall and brought bluegrass to the mainstream with their theme song for the TV show *The Beverly Hillbillies*.

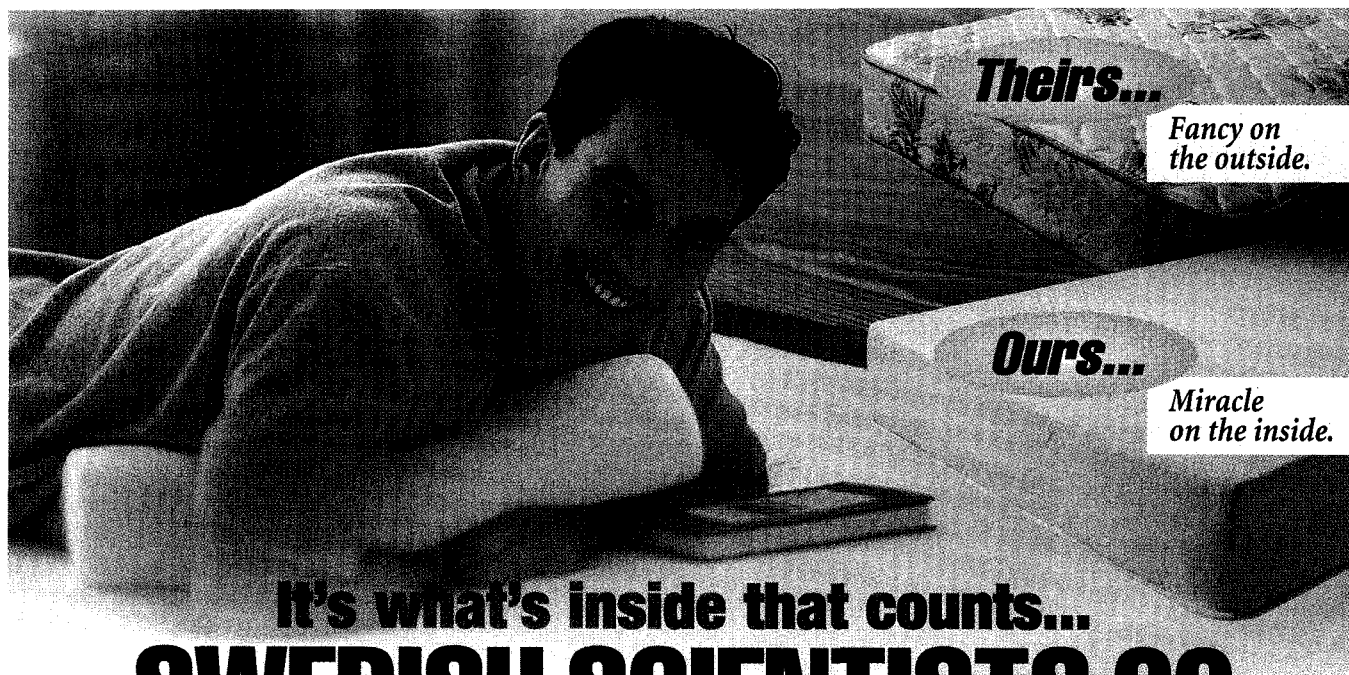
In comparative obscurity, Bill Monroe had continued to develop as a musician, a composer, and a leader. His bands had slowly declined in quality, but his mandolin playing had, if anything, gained in sharpness and intelligence. When folkies searched beyond Flatt and Scruggs, they were rewarded by discovery of the Blue Grass Boys. Folklorists and urban folk musicians booked Monroe into colleges and folk clubs, publicized him, and helped to get his 1950s singles reissued in LP format. Monroe had bitterly resented the fame of Flatt and Scruggs and the Stanley Brothers. Now he accepted and

pursued a role as the father of a genre whose very existence he might have questioned as late as the early 1950s.

From the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s, while many of his earlier competitors fell by the wayside, Monroe consolidated his position not only as the subculture's most energetic advocate but also as a teacher of younger bluegrass musicians, many of whom passed through his bands. Treating outsiders with reserve and young musicians with generosity suited Monroe's role as patriarch. His snow-white sideburns and general cragginess, and his high standards of musicianship, enhanced not only his aura of being the survivor of a bygone era but also his music's aura of being the purest fountain of country inspiration. Monroe repeatedly emphasized bluegrass's social value, its "honesty," its capacity for bringing people together and inspiring friendship. He was revered at bluegrass festivals all over the country. Rachel Liebling's documentary film *High Lonesome* (1991) purveyed the Monroe legend to the outside world; in Nashville, where Monroe lived and worked—and where the music industry largely ignores classic bluegrass—Bill Monroe is mentioned in tones of awe. He performed on *Grand Ole Opry* until shortly before he died.

IF bluegrass is a distillation of the fermenting mash that was hillbilly music in the 1930s and early 1940s, *The Mountain* recalls the pre-1945 Bill Monroe, who brought intensity to an eclectic form, not the iconic Monroe. Mixing songs in a variety of country traditions, *The Mountain* also recalls early country bands such as the Carter Family, Mainer's Mountaineers, and Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers. The rawness of Earle's singing, instantly recognizable for its mixture of roughhousing and friendliness, both updates bluegrass with rock personality and returns it to the early days of country recording with high-spirited picking and singing.

After a fragment of studio tuning and Earle's motor-mouth back talk, the album opens with the insistent striking of a single guitar string until it arrives at a percussive crescendo where the rock-trained ear wants electric bass and drums; fiddle, banjo, mandolin, and string bass then launch "Texas Eagle." Earle's first sung phrase—"My granddaddy was a railroad man"—suggests that the trip will be fun. Long experience in achieving trenchancy through



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simplicity allows Earle to escape all the risks inherent in essaying "the train song," with its connotations of classic Americana, and to reinvent the subject even while letting it feel familiar. The musical setting of "Texas Eagle" is familiar too, but it benefits from an almost insidious charisma that is also characteristic of Earle's gifts. To a rocking, four-square beat the narrator's progress from childhood to adulthood is packed snugly into three six-line verses, each of which is followed, predictably enough, by an instrumental passage. Yet the tune has irresistible circular motion—the train's to and from San Antonio, the narrator's away from and back to childhood. Earle prevents the shrewd choices at work in the structure of "Texas Eagle" from calling attention to themselves.

The Mountain is able to embrace the major styles and subjects of country music while seeming always unified and integrated. "Yours Forever Blue" is a twelve-bar boogie, more conventional than "Texas Eagle." "I'm Still in Love With You" is a honky-tonk slow dance with the fine singer Iris DeMent. There are rousing Irish pub music, many kinds of blues, saloon ragtime, Celtic dance, and a slow and moving hymn, "Pilgrim," that might as well be a camp-meeting chestnut like "Blessed Be the Name" or "We'll Camp a Little While in the Wilderness." American history, of which Earle seems to be a buff, is dramatized in "Dixieland" (based on Michael Shaara's Civil War novel *The Killer Angels*), a song that shares with Earle's earlier history songs an evocation of American rowdiness—the "Damn all gentlemen" and "What care I for praise" attitude of Scots-Irish defiance (with close counterparts in blues and hip-hop) that Earle presents as a mixed blessing but an inevitability.

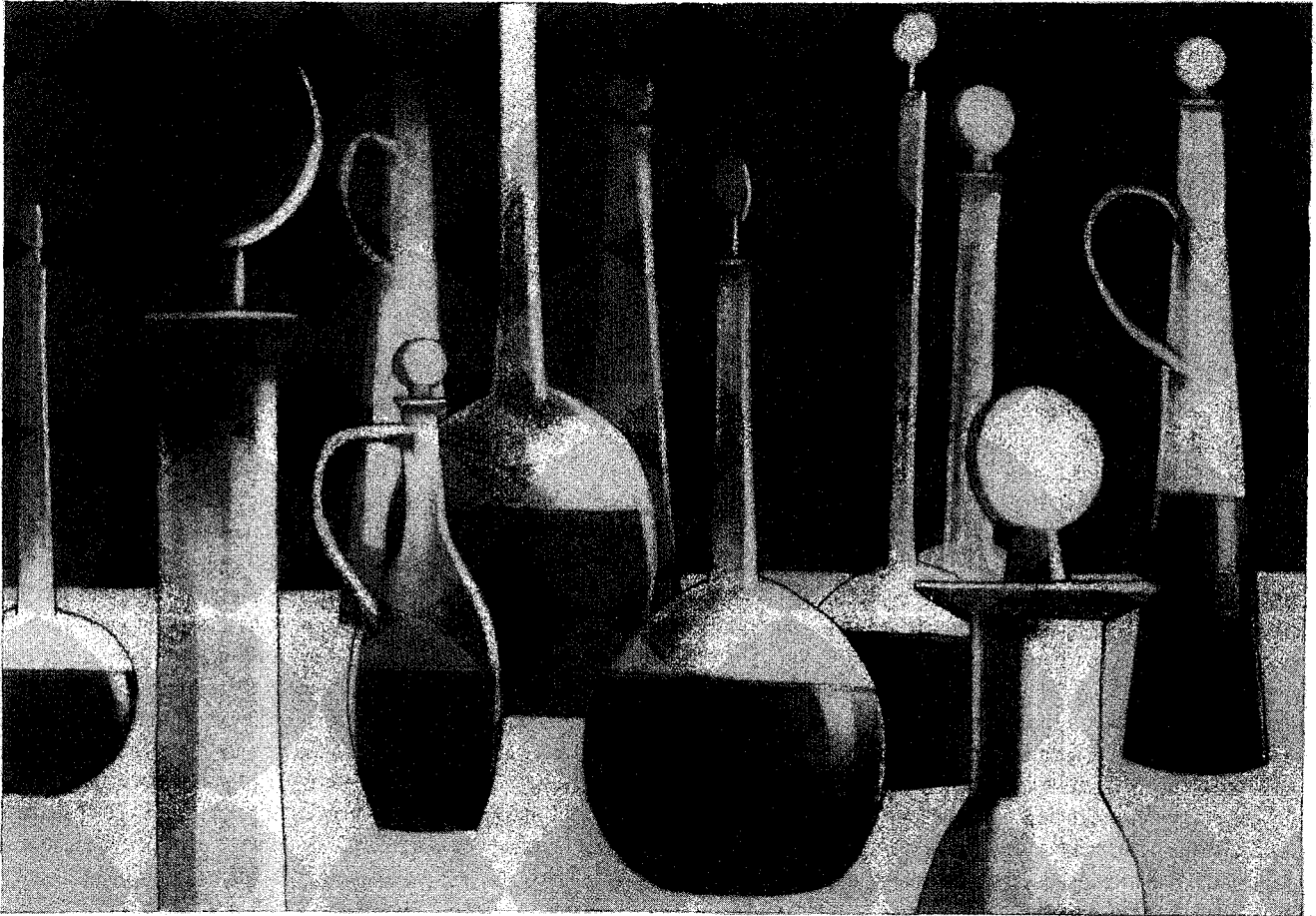
History also pervades the album's centerpiece, a two-song suite—"Harlan Man" and "The Mountain"—with a coal-mining theme. The first song connects the toughness of mining with the immovability that once characterized organized labor; its static, modal throb reminds us that rock music came as much from mountains and pine barrens as from Memphis. "The Mountain" disrupts and then extinguishes all the relentless bravado of "Harlan Man." The song is a state-ly waltz in which an old man looks back over his years as a miner and the destruction and abandonment by the coal com-

panies of his mountain home, where he nevertheless insists on staying until he dies. There's not even a saving shred of nostalgia or pastoralism; this mountain is the ghost of a rural-industrial ghetto. On repeated hearings the narrator's clear-eyed description and his confession of eternal connection to a ruined place become irredeemably anguished.

The superb playing of the Del McCoury Band on all these tracks—particularly Ronnie McCoury's mandolin playing, which is never less than fleet, firm, and tasteful—is one reason for the absence of any jarring sense of eclecticism. The band subordinates virtuosity to ensemble drive, and in making only sparing use of the "high lonesome" vocal sound may remind the jaded how powerful that sound can be. (Del McCoury's tenor vocals on "Long, Lonesome Highway Blues" and "Carrie Brown" are likely to prick up some ears.) Much of the music classified as "contemporary folk," in which one might hope to find new songs and idiosyncratic vocals set to unamplified band music, employs electrification and drums. *The Mountain* may help to give music in the hillbilly tradition greater cachet, at least briefly, than it usually enjoys outside the thriving bluegrass subculture.

Groundbreaking though it may be, *The Mountain* does not lack parallels in recent roots music. A generation ago Emmylou Harris's *Roses in the Snow* brought country-rock listeners to bluegrass and helped to restore instrumental virtuosity to mainstream country. Harris's 1992 *At the Ryman* used a bluegrass-style band to cover country, pop, and folk songs by composers from Stephen Foster to Steve Earle. On the blues side Corey Harris has mixed solo guitar playing in which the instrument becomes a band of its own with hoarse, jagged brass figures—reinventing a moment when country and city musics clashed and gave birth to modern pop.

Steve Earle himself would hardly claim to be unique. He has always given credit to his teachers, who include his fellow Texans Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark, leaders in the 1960s and 1970s of an influential songwriting scene. He gathers up the forms that fed bluegrass, blues, country, and rock and gives them smart, rugged songwriting treatments that enliven rather than exploit or mummify them. It's possible to see Earle as having absorbed and surpassed the work of his teachers, including Bill Monroe. ☞



The Sweet of the Sour

*Other vinegars have the sweet-sour interest
for which balsamic is so admired*

SINCE I saw my first age-darkened barrel of balsamic vinegar, balsamic seems to have replaced red-wine vinegar as a pantry staple in virtually every corner of this country. Last May I returned to Modena, in the rich industrial northern-Italian region of Emilia-Romagna, and visited a number of producers of “traditional” balsamic vinegar—the kind that costs a small fortune—in and around the city’s

by Corby Kummer

beautifully preserved medieval and Renaissance center. I’ve already written about the progress of the syrupy, cor-dovan-red liquid from barrel to barrel in the sloped attics of old estates (see “The Noble Vinegar,” September, 1994, *Atlantic*). On this trip I listened for hours to updates on the battles royal over the designation “balsamic vinegar of Modena”—which, to the understandable dismay of my hosts, the Consorzio Pro-

duttori di Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena, can be used by anyone anywhere (the Consorzio has exclusive rights only to the word *tradizionale*).

I concentrated less on labeling disputes than on how the vinegar tastes and how best to use it. In the past year or two I have sampled and used many kinds of vinegar; coming to know and rely on other kinds has focused my taste for balsamic—and intensified my dislike for the indiscriminately sweet, caramel-laced industrial product common in both supermarkets and gourmet stores. I now search harder for nuanced flavor and a subtle balance of sweet and sour. In Modena I discovered a few affordable balsamic vinegars that approach the complexity of the small-fortune kind.

I also learned to be generous. Some restaurateurs in this country bring a bottle to the table with great ceremony and dispense the thick liquid with an eyedropper—a ridiculous and stingy practice. Restaurateurs in Emilia-Romagna use spoons or pour straight from the bottle.

BEASTLY weather seems to be essential to creating the vinegars I like best. Even in late May the Modenese heat and humidity were stifling, and the air never moved. Factories in the Po Valley help to cause frequent inversions, but long before industry came, the plains suffered damp, cold winters and close, humid summers. I could well imagine how the various perfumed woods—juniper, chestnut, cherry, mulberry, and, of course, oak among them—used in vinegar barrels, tucked in the hottest part of a house, under the slopes of the attic, could sweat into the vinegar, and how the vinegar would invade the relaxed pores of the wood, looking for a breath of fresh air. The torrid weather makes balsamic vinegar work hard to survive: as much as 80 to 85 percent of it evaporates during the minimum twelve years of aging for *tradizionale*. Cool winters give both wood and vinegar time to rest before the next season's workout.

Good wood and plenty of grape sugar are also essential to vinegars I like—but not wine. Most wine vinegar doesn't interest me. I've tried many vinegars made by artisans using exceptional wines as a base, and have found them too thin and sharp. Although almost all vinegar is around six percent acetic acid when it's bottled, producers often water it down to bring it to that level, diluting flavor and texture. Grape sugar tempers the acidity of balsamic vinegar, and the aging in wood gives it interest. My usual salad dressing is oil and lemon juice; if I'm substituting a vinegar (or, more likely, adding vinegar to the lemon juice), I want it to have citrus fruit's push-pull of sweet and sour, and the mellow depth that only wood aging can provide.

Adding sugar to vinegar is not the way to get that push-pull, although virtually every producer of balsamic vinegar outside Modena does that, and quite a few in Modena as well. Balsamic vinegar starts not with wine, in which most or all of the grape sugar has fermented to alcohol, but with the cooked-down juice of very sweet grapes, itself quite thick. Producers who want to save time and money and satisfy customer demand add caramel or cooked-down grape juice to already fermented vinegar. Although the deep pur-

ple-brown color and heavy density may be right, the flavor is somewhere between Passover wine and grape jelly. Most fruit vinegars are a sham too. "Raspberry" vinegar is usually just indifferent white-wine vinegar with raspberry extract, sometimes artificial, added at the end.

Other, true fruit-based vinegars have both the sweet-sour interest and the wood-aged complexity I so admire in balsamic. Cider vinegar, for instance, has the potential for greatness: it can be fermented directly from apples and aged in wood. I love cider vinegar on fresh melon and over fruit salad, and recently looked hard for a source of wood-aged cider vinegar, which seems to have fallen out of fashion. Ster-



ling True Cider Vinegar soldiers on, however, and you can call the distributor at 800-800-2155 to learn where to find it.

Recently I discovered the unusual and worthy maple vinegar, which is fermented from maple syrup rather than simply flavored with it. John Boyajian, a Massachusetts food importer and producer, ferments syrup he buys from Vermonters (including Martin von Trapp, of the *Sound of Music* family), using vinegar-fermenting bacteria, or "mother," provided as a legacy by Orpha Smith, a Vermont woman he discovered making maple vinegar when she was in her nineties. Smith fermented hers for a minimum of eleven months; Boyajian has shortened the process to two and a half months. Even if his vinegar lacks the depth created by wood aging (he uses plastic vats), it has a light maple tang utterly different from maple's usual achingly sweet flavor. An eight-ounce bottle of maple vinegar costs six or seven dollars; the Whole Foods chain sells it, or you can call Boyajian at 800-965-0665.

Sherry vinegar is as interesting as balsamic but far less well known. Sherry is a fortified wine, meaning that the initial fermentation is halted (by the addition of neutral spirits) while the wine is still relatively high in grape sugar; the wine is aged in barrels of oak carefully chosen for its porosity, in Jerez, on Spain's Atlantic coast, where summers are torrid and winters are cool. Sherry passes through many barrels and is continually mixed with wines of various ages, so the end

product, like balsamic vinegar, contains both relatively young and very old liquid.

Although sherry vinegar is never as syrupy as balsamic, and tastes more potently acidic, it often has comparable balance and depth. The range of flavors includes strong oak, leather, mushroom, and the salt of the sea air. Ari Weinzweig, a founder of the Ann Arbor food shop Zingerman's, has long been a champion of sherry vinegar; I learned to share his enthusiasm when I helped to edit an informative and concise pamphlet he wrote on vinegar. Of the sherry vinegars I've tried, my favorite is twenty-five-year-old Sanchez Romate (\$19 for a bottle of just over twenty-five ounces, available from Zingerman's at 888-636-8162 or www.zingermans.com), because of its initial sweetness and final acid hit that never seems harsh. I find younger vinegars too sharp and older ones too musty. I immediately wanted to try the twenty-five-year-old on sturdy oakleaf lettuce and on tomatoes, which sherry vinegar especially complements.

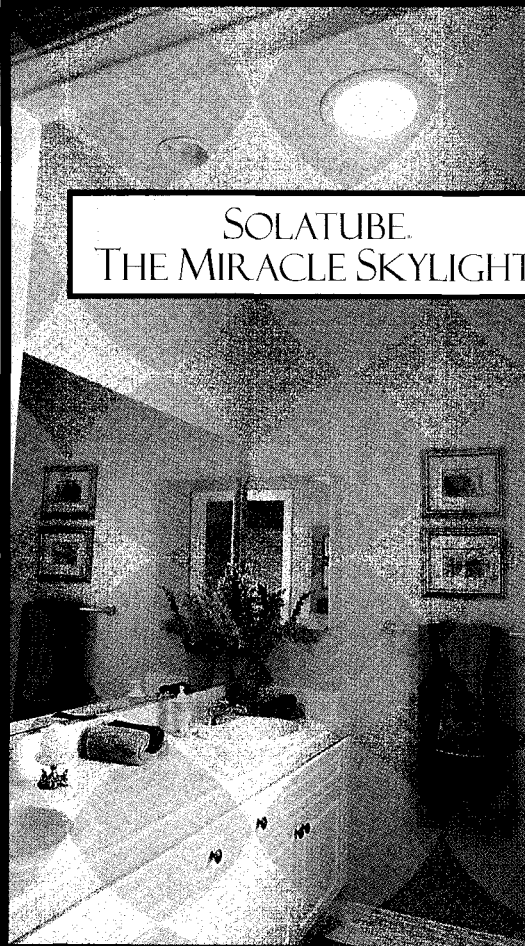
Any fortified wine, particularly a sweet one, should be a good vinegar candidate. But I've never encountered a noteworthy champagne vinegar. (The Spanish do better making vinegar from cava, a sparkling wine made like champagne.) Two fortified white wines do make lovely vinegars, thinner than balsamic or sherry vinegar but with a bit of weight on the tongue and plenty of flavor overtones. Banyuls, a rare French dessert wine, is the base for a strong, oaky vinegar (available from Dean & DeLuca, 800-221-7714, at \$15 for about eleven and a half ounces) that is a far more interesting choice in any dish calling for white-wine vinegar. An eccentric and revered restaurateur in Piedmont named Cesare Giaccione produces a muscat vinegar that tastes particularly sweet and gentle, even though it has the same six percent acidity as other vinegars (\$12.95 for about eight and a half ounces, from A. G. Ferrari Foods, at 877-878-2783 or www.agferrari.com). German late-harvest Trockenbeerenauslese and Eiswein, among the world's rarest and sweetest wines, produce vinegars so fine and sweet that they are *only* sipped. Zingerman's sells Trockenbeerenauslese at \$100 and Eiswein (made from grapes that have frozen and thus contain extremely concentrated sugar) at \$145 for about eight and a half ounces; before you

commit to buying, the store will send you a free taste in a little plastic cup. I wouldn't refuse a Bibb-lettuce salad dressed with either vinegar, but sipped straight these go down beautifully.

As for balsamic vinegars, I'm less impressed than I once was with the concoctions called "condiments" (the term avoids labeling controversies), which are usually blends of very young vinegars with cooked-down grape juice. I prefer the real thing—the *tradizionale*. In Modena last May, as part of a balsamic-vinegar festival, volunteers manning little wooden huts that dotted the city center doled out tastes of the traditional-vinegar consortium's two varieties—one aged a minimum of twelve years, the other a minimum of twenty-five years. I had come to the conclusion that the twelve-year-old, introduced by the consortium as a lower-priced alternative, was not worth bothering with: once you've decided to pay more than \$50 for less than three and a half ounces, you might as well buy the older vinegar and see what the fuss is about.

But then I happened on a twelve-year-old traditional vinegar that impressed me with its roundness and full flavor—so much so that after tasting it at a booth I bought two bottles on the spot and later went to visit the producer, a few miles out of town. A tour of the Malpighi estate, with its hundreds of aging barrels, showed me how a blend of younger vinegars could so closely approximate older ones: the family has many, many vinegars to choose from, whereas most other producers have a modest number at their disposal. The marketing of the product of what was an aristocratic hobby is, after all, a phenomenon of only the past twenty years, and most bottlers' reserves are small. I was not startled to learn that the Malpighi family's chief business is steel, and that it bought the barrels of many old families to build its stock. (Williams-Sonoma sells twelve-year-old Malpighi for \$89 and twenty-five-year-old for \$174 in bottles of a little less than three and a half ounces.)

A rival consortium in Modena sells younger vinegars made under less-strict rules, which allow producers to add cooked-down grapes. These, which will have "*Aceto balsamico di Modena*" on the label without the "*tradizionale*," are inexpensive enough to be used frequently. Many are cloying and monochromatic. But I did find one, Villa Ma-



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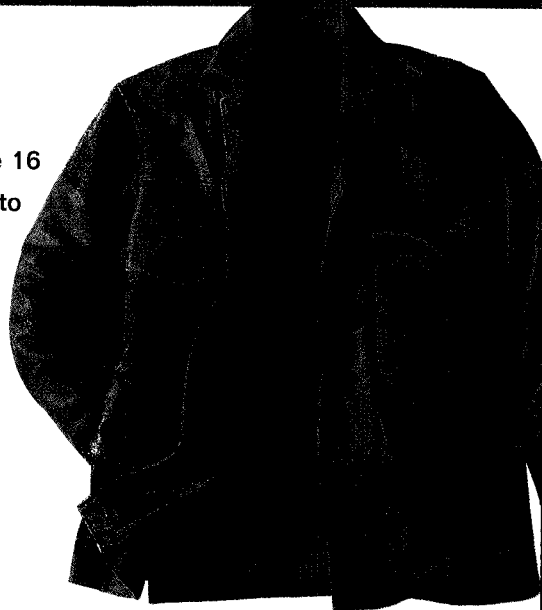
DAN

- ▶ Took flying lessons – age 16
- ▶ Hitchhiked from Boston to Mexico City – age 22
- ▶ Started rock climbing – age 34
- ▶ Quit rock climbing – age 34
- ▶ Learned how to juggle four oranges – age 41

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nodori, made by Massimo Bottura, an ambitious young Modena-born chef trained in France and America, that was an excellent compromise between traditional and the rest (Salumeria Italiana, a Boston food store, at 800-400-5916, sells a bottle of about eight and a half ounces for \$35). Balducci's, the Manhattan gourmet store, also sells several exceptionally well-balanced and relatively inexpensive balsamic vinegars, which it blends itself (800-225-3822).

MODENESE cooks have, naturally, found surprising uses for their most famous product—uses I couldn't have predicted from my own kitchen experiments, and certainly not from the ways I've seen (cheap) balsamic vinegar splashed around in American restaurants. The idea is that if it's a local specialty, balsamic vinegar will go well with it. That holds true more frequently than I would have thought.

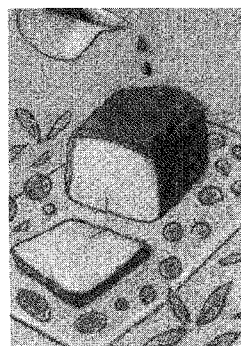
Emilia-Romagna is famous for its cured meats, and one might think that the strong flavors of salami and sausage would do battle with vinegar. But *coppa* and *cotechino* and other local specialties contain little pepper and usually no garlic. There's just the sweet taste of pork with pork fat and salt, and balsamic vinegar enhances it the way truffles enhance eggs. (Like truffles, balsamic vinegar goes well with delicate flavors: scrambled eggs and omelets, and vegetables with pleasing but not domineering flavors, such as fresh fava beans and zucchini blossoms.) The Modenese also pride themselves on *bollito misto*, steaming boiled meats displayed on a rolling cart; deluxe restaurants generously drizzle balsamic vinegar over the fragrant freshly cut slices. Lynne Rossetto Kasper, whose 1992 book *The Splendid Table* made Emilia-Romagna a stop nearly as important for food-hunting Americans as Tuscany, gives a recipe for "Balsamico roast chicken and potatoes" in her new *The Italian Country Table* that demonstrates how well balsamic vinegar, in a marinade and sprinkled over the whole dish before serving, can show off meat.

The emphasis on meat—and butter, too—in the rich cuisine of Emilia-

Romagna, coupled with an almost phobic avoidance of vegetables in restaurants (homes are another story), long kept me incurious. My impulse was to flee the region after one meal. Imagine my pleasure when I discovered a restaurant where nearly everything on the table had been picked from the cook's garden a few hours before.

Italian gastronomes love Lancellotti, and lately foreigners have been discovering this unprepossessing restaurant, a few miles from Modena. Angelo, Emilio, and Francesco, the three brothers who run the place under the continued supervision of their strong-willed parents, are one reason. Their fifteen-acre garden, which is what's left of the family farm whose income the parents felt they needed to supplement with a restaurant, is the main one. Angelo Lancellotti, an eccentric, exuberant man who cooks with his Czech wife, Zdena, tends the garden according to biodynamic principles largely formulated by him. These include planting small amounts of very different herbs and vegetables right beside one another, depending on which need shade and which sun, resulting in a haphazard, sloppy look and intensely flavored herbs and salad greens.

At Lancellotti I ate the single best green salad of my life, a mixture of greens that usually grow wild but that Angelo had cultivated. Familiar leaves such as lamb's lettuce, sorrel, arugula, and dandelion (whose ovoid, deeply toothed leaf is the restaurant's symbol) had a fine intensi-



ty of flavor and a buttery soft sweetness I had never before encountered and still don't understand; I attribute their taste to Angelo's unconventional gardening techniques. There were unfamiliar greens too, which Angelo collected from fields and woods and other people's gardens (some of them are available in U.S. seed cata-

logues), including salad burnet and bronze fennel. Two edible flowers are Angelo's particular favorites: peppery nasturtium and cucumberlike borage. The dressing was a mixture of mild Ligurian olive oil and traditional balsamic vinegar—made by Francesco Lancellotti in a family attic—mixed in a luxurious two-to-one ratio.

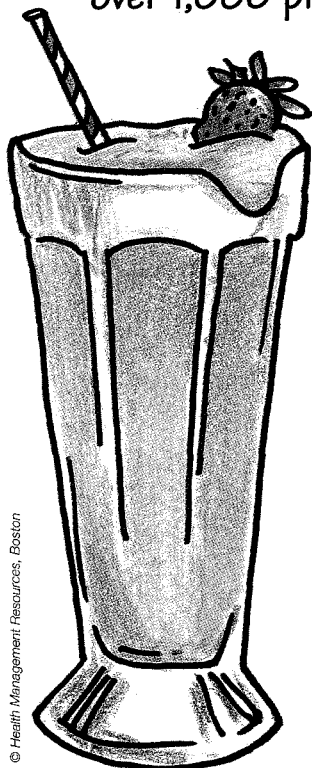
I sampled many dishes using balsamic vinegar (at least twenty over five days) at restaurants in and around Modena, many of which, like Lancellotti, serve vinegar made in their own barrels. But on reflection and with at-home experimentation I've concluded that simplest is still best. (The two classic ways to serve it, besides in a dressing, are over vanilla ice cream and with fresh strawberries.) Lancellotti presents newly arrived diners with chunks of fresh Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese "baptized" with balsamic vinegar, which looks like purple veining on the irregular, straw-colored pieces. This is an ideal way to keep guests happy while you finish preparing dinner, especially if, like Lancellotti, you serve the cheese with a full-bodied sparkling wine—say, a spumante from Valdobbiadene, in the Veneto region between Verona and Venice, or a Spanish cava such as Segura Viudas Reserva Heredad. As with most very simple dishes, the ingredients must be perfect: fresh, moist Parmigiano-Reggiano at room temperature, and traditional vinegar, syrupy enough to vein and begin to penetrate the cheese rather than splashing over it and forming a puddle.

Angelo was particularly enthusiastic about a salad of his own devising, which "exalts" the flavor of balsamic vinegar in a surprisingly powerful way, given the simplicity of the dish. I generally look to subtract ingredients from any recipe that calls for more than, say, three, but I was amazed at how all the components of this salad build to a balsamic climax.

The salad features pears and dandelion greens (both of which arrive at markets fresh in the fall and continue through early winter), arugula, and raspberries; chicory or other "frisée" salad leaves, slightly bitter, can be substituted for the dandelion. For each person mix one cup of washed arugula and one cup of washed dandelion or frisée leaves, cut into one-inch lengths, and a firm Bosc pear, peeled, quartered, and cut into slices or chunks. In a separate bowl mix the dressing: for each person stir together one tablespoon of extra-virgin olive oil and one tablespoon of lemon juice, and add a quarter cup of raspberries, fresh or frozen and rinsed. Crush the berries with a fork and stir in salt to taste. Toss the dressing with the greens and the pear, and with modest ceremony drizzle a teaspoon of good balsamic vinegar over the salad—not with an eyedropper, please. ☼

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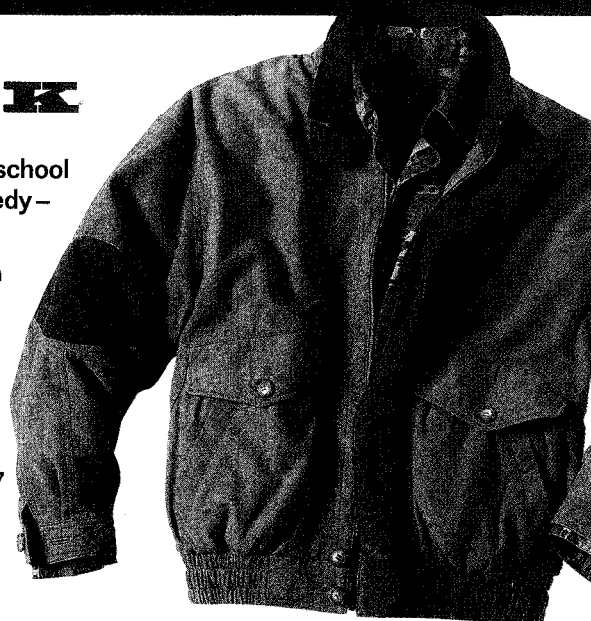
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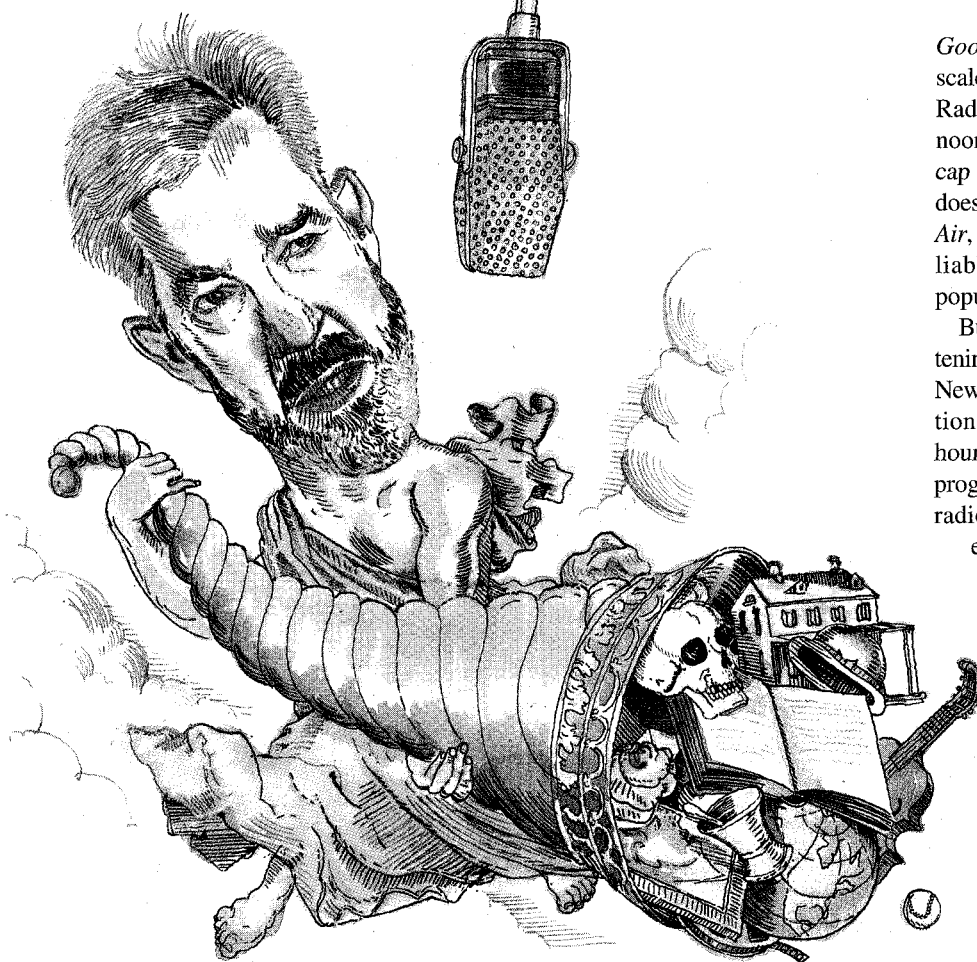
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Listening to Lydon

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THOUGH the average American spends twenty-two hours a week listening to the radio, it's hidden in plain view. Almost no one reviews radio shows, and newspapers bury what scant radio listings they print.

For the most part that makes sense, because

very little that is new ever happens on most stations. The same songs spin endlessly, often programmed by computer in some distant city and sent via satellite to local transmitters. The talkers offer mostly shtick, comforting because it never varies—there's blowhard shtick and

raunchy shtick and even genuinely funny shtick, like *Car Talk*. And of course there's traffic and weather on the fives. But on the extreme left of the dial—the numbers below 92 FM—you can find the virtual college town.

by Bill McKibben

Most cities have at least one really fine public-radio chat show—Leonard Lopate in New York; Steve Scher in Seattle; Diane Rehm in Washington, D.C.; Michael Krasny in San Francisco. (I've been on most of these shows on one book tour or another; invariably it's the highlight of my visit, the bonus for smiling through

Good Morning Cleveland.) On a larger scale, Ray Suarez hosts National Public Radio's *Talk of the Nation* in the afternoon, and usually overcomes the handicap of his Washington base. Though she doesn't take calls, Terry Gross, on *Fresh Air*, has for twenty-four years offered a reliably wise and wide-ranging take on popular culture.

But it's Christopher Lydon I've been listening to since last fall, when my upstate New York radio station picked up his nationally syndicated broadcast. For two hours each weekday morning he hosts a program called *The Connection* from his radio studio at WBUR, in Boston, and every day he demonstrates how radio can be so much more than audible

wallpaper. He is general interest incarnate. His voice is erudite and extremely fluent—no umms, no set phrases—and his range is immense. When he takes on a political issue, he betrays his origins as a newspaper reporter—he actually follows through on a story, trying to shed some light rather than presiding over a cable-TV-style cockfight. Most of the media treated the Russian economic meltdown, for instance, as a natural disaster, without much background or future; for Lydon it was an intellectual puzzle to which he devoted five or six programs. He must have devoted fifteen hours to Kosovo last spring; regular listeners were among the few Americans to sense the extent of the internal Serb opposition.

In any guise politics takes up only about a third of *The Connection*, which is why the program sounds so fresh. It is open to the idea that our lives might consist of many excellences—in music, poetry, food, film, love. It's open to the notion that a lot of things are kind of interesting. The program runs in two one-hour segments each morning: Eric Bogosian, Robert Brustein, Sven Birkerts, a gospel musician, a ska band, or Robert Fagles on his new translation of *The Odyssey* might be followed by a session on Muhammad Ali, Eartha Kitt, or several waiters discussing life behind the tray. A few of the usual professional talk-show guests do appear (oh, no, not Camille Paglia, Rahm Emanuel, Alan Dershowitz), but they are vastly outnum-

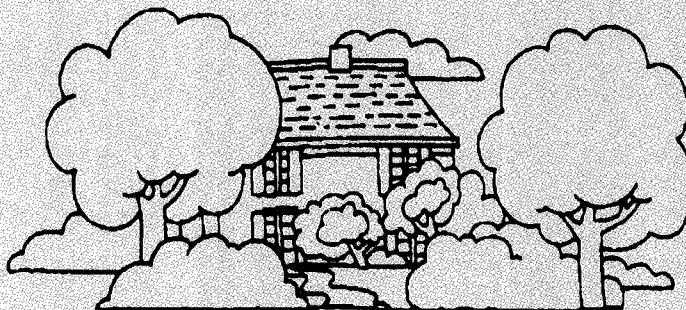
bered by surprises. Here's A. N. Wilson to discuss the start of the Christian Church; Simon Schama and Jamaica Kincaid discussing snow; Illinois Jacquet or Dave Brubeck (Lydon has a feel for jazz); Robert Strassler on the Peloponnesian War; Bill Barich on racehorses.

A typical day might feature one guest discussing "doing Buddhism" followed by a squad of academics on new developments in the understanding of early childhood, or the latest on the war in the Congo followed by "Dear Diary," a guide to keeping a journal. Some segments offer wonderful rediscoveries: Mort Sahl, or Tom Lehrer, who turned his hour into a detailed celebration of Stephen Sondheim and the American lyric tradition. Others introduce important but difficult voices to a broader audience—it's hard to imagine another talk-show host in America with the guts to bring on the iconoclastic but brilliant essayist George W. S. Trow.

Boston, Cambridge, and environs not only provide a steady supply of guests; they make one realize what a mistake it is that most journalistic enterprises are based in Washington or New York, guaranteeing a steady diet of politics and money and almost nothing else. The professoriat may not be particularly powerful, but it contains the last full-time thinkers in our economy. And the callers are often even better. They rarely call in to rant; Lydon's generosity of spirit seems to have spread to his audience. One day around Halloween the novelist Harlan Ellison appeared to talk about scary writing. Midway through the show Ellison became upset when Lydon referred to some of his work as "science fiction." He got up and left. The calls did not stop: instantly the program became a discussion of genre fiction and why its writers might be sensitive to ghettoization. Lydon ended the hour by reading part of an Ellison short story he particularly likes.

Ada Louise Huxtable on America's fascination with simulation, Isabella Rossellini on beauty, Bobby Short on Duke Ellington, the director of MTV's *The Real World* on "The Observed Life: Is It Worth Living?," a vegetarian chef on "Big Flavor, Without the Meat," Robert Nozick on Socrates, a batting coach on how to hit a curve ball, Robert Hass judging a haiku contest, Donald Hall on poetry and grief, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Yo-Yo Ma, Loudon Wainwright III, electric deregulation, twenty-five-cent words—Lydon handles it all with casual aplomb, as if he were

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the host at a particularly good brunch. It's only when he's away that you understand just how good he is. One day last fall a fill-in host staged a familiar catfight among women opinionators over Bill Clinton. No matter what anybody said, she kept dragging the conversation back to the same tired debate: Were feminists letting the President off easy for his affair? Eventually someone named Ti-Grace phoned in, with a long and quite brilliant monologue on the whole subject; it was almost certainly the feminist writer Ti-Grace Atkinson, but to this host it was just someone to cut off as quickly as possible because she was straying from the insipid point. Lydon seems genuinely interested in his callers. One day not long ago he was interviewing an author about the life of Shostakovich, his music, and his struggles with the Soviets. A caller rang up, a Russian émigré violinist with the Boston Symphony, who had once rehearsed a new Shostakovich piece in the composer's Moscow apartment. She described the occasion, the man, the music, all at some length, and Lydon did not stop her.

Lydon has his blind spots. As befits an urban intellectual, he rarely discusses the physical world, the environment, the grand sweep of nature that informs more lives than jazz or avant-garde film. But that means only that there should be a few more Chris Lydons, each with the courage of his or her idiosyncrasies and with enough of a budget to get on the air.

Sometimes public radio seems to be losing its touch—flagship programs like *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*, fine as they are, seem more and more to restrict their gaze to politics and policy, leaving aside the other 350 degrees of human life. But more often than any other medium, public radio finds common turf from which to operate. A spectacular example is *This American Life*, a weekly documentary hour hosted by Ira Glass, which does things with the sound of human talk that no one else has managed since recording was invented. A steady, reliable example is *The Connection*, every weekday morning from 10:00 to 12:00 EDT, with Oliver Sacks, with Martin Amis, with Tim McCarver, with Barry Lopez—celebrating Bloomsday, following World Cup soccer, explicating the vibraphonist Gary Burton's four-mallet technique, debating the pros and cons of bachelorhood. It's the world pre-irony, a place that's still worth ambling through. ☞

ANSWERS TO THE SEPTEMBER PUZZLER

N	E	R	V	E	S	F	O	R	E	V	E	R	S
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"Shakedown"

The "shakedown" words are MOUNT EVEREST, VENTURESOME, VERMONTSE, OVERTENSE, VERONESE, VENEERS, NERVES, SERVE, EVER, and VEE ("one letter"). Across. 5. FOR + EVERS 10. I'D + AS 11. D(RUM) UP 13. CO(R) + GI 16. RASH + NESS 17. ET + HOS 19. I(RIDES)CE 21. RE(REA)D 23. L(OCAT)E (rev.) 25. SE(LASS) + DE 29. A + TRIA(I) 30. SPECIMENS (anag.) 31. CL + ERIC 32. DESSERTS (homophone) 33. DON + EES (rev.) Down. 1. NICOSIA (anag.) 2. EDO (rev.) 3. R(ARE) + R 4. EDIT + S (rev.) 5. F(URN)ACE 6. O + MA'S + A 7. EPHEMERA (anag.) 8. RE + SO + NATION 9. SA(SS + E)D 12. T(E)-HEE 14. GRADUATIONS (anag.) 15. FE(A)STER 18. PRE(LA + C)Y 20. ENTRANCE (double def.) 22. TEA(SE(I)R)S 23. LE(AVE)D 24. CURRY (double def.) 26. U(P)SE + T 27. D(IS)C + O 28. VERVE (hidden)

The Holocaust and the Catholic Church

*Some in the Vatican want to make Pius XII a saint. If they succeed,
“the Church will have sealed its second millennium with a lie”*

by James Carroll

HITLER'S POPE: The Secret History of Pius XII

by John Cornwell.
Viking, 448 pages, \$29.95.

IT is appropriate that, as the Second Millennium of Christianity draws to a close—this is John Paul II, in his 1994 apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*—“the Church should become more fully conscious of the sinfulness of her children,” recalling all those times in

history when they “indulged in ways of thinking and acting which were truly forms of counterwitness and scandal.” The sinful “children” of the Church, spokesmen insist, can include its leaders, even bishops and popes. Yet when the long-awaited Vatican document examining the record of the Church in relation to the Holocaust, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, was published last year, it singled out for special praise “the wisdom of Pope Pius XII’s diplomacy.” This seemed to be a direct rebuttal to an oft-raised criticism of the wartime Pope,

whose “silence” in the face of the Jewish genocide had become for many an emblem of the Church’s own “counterwitness and scandal.” The Vatican pronouncement came as reports surfaced that the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints was preparing to advance the cause of Pius XII toward sainthood. At the end of the millennium Pope John Paul II, in the words of an observer writing in the periodical *Inside the Vatican*, “is preparing, not to denounce Pius, but to canonize him.”

The process of canonization is secret, and there is no official word that

Pius XII is about to be beatified, the penultimate step toward sainthood. But it seems to signal something that his positive prospects are being openly discussed—even by the Vatican official in charge of promoting his cause. If Pius XII were to be named a saint of the Roman Catholic Church, more than the restoration of his reputation would result. His policy of silence about Nazi atrocities would be justified. He would be credited with the secret rescue of Jews that was carried out by many individual Catholics across Europe. (*We Remember* honors Pius XII for what he “did personally or through his representatives to save



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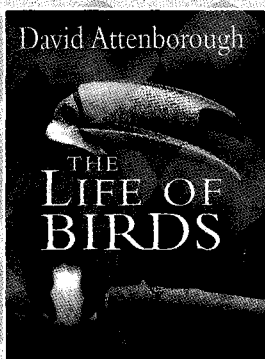
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hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives.") By extension, Hitler's hatred of Jews would be defined as rooted in "neo-pagan" atheism, not in Christianity. The Catholic Church, and the Vatican in particular, would be listed as among Hitler's mortal enemies, and exonerated from charges of at least passive collaboration in Nazi crimes. The Church's sinlessness would be confirmed. The papal absolutism of which Pius XII was the avatar, and which faltered under John XXIII and Paul VI, would be vindicated as John Paul II's lasting legacy. If Pius XII were to be named a saint, in other words, the Catholic Church could enter the new millennium with its timeless claim to moral transcendence intact.

In this context the arrival of the first serious and complete biography of Eugenio Pacelli, Pius XII, could not be more timely. Its author, John Cornwell, a contributor to Britain's distinguished Catholic publication *The Tablet*, embarked on the project, as he says in the preface, "convinced that if his full story were told, Pius XII's pontificate, and the Catholic Church, would be vindicated." Cornwell, it seems, is a conventional Roman Catholic with an instinctive wish to defend the Church from accusations of malfeasance and worse regarding the twentieth-century fate of the Jews. As such, he says, he gained access to heretofore unavailable sources within the Vatican—documents from the Secretariat of State and, especially, sworn depositions gathered decades ago in the early stages of Pius XII's promotion to sainthood. "By the middle of 1997, nearing the end of my research," he writes, "I found myself in a state I can only describe as moral shock. The material I had gathered, taking the more extensive view of Pacelli's life, amounted not to an exoneration but to a wider indictment."

That indictment is made explicit in the title Cornwell has given his book: *Hitler's Pope*. His criticism, rooted in a painstaking examination of Pacelli's record as the Vatican's point man in dealing with the rise of Hitler in the 1930s and of his maneuvering as Pius XII during the war years, is a devastating refutation of the claim that this Pope's diplomacy can in any way be characterized as wisdom. Instead of a portrait of a man worthy of sainthood, Cornwell lays out the story of a narcissistic, power-hungry manipulator who was prepared to lie, to ap-

pease, and to collaborate in order to accomplish his ecclesiastical purpose—which was not to save lives or even to protect the Catholic Church but, more narrowly, to protect and advance the power of the papacy. Pacelli's personal history, his character, and his obsession with Vatican prerogatives combined at the crucial hour to make him "the ideal Pope for Hitler's unspeakable plan," Cornwell writes. "He was Hitler's pawn. He was Hitler's Pope."

THE young priest Eugenio Pacelli was trained not as a theologian but as a canon lawyer. He was ordained in 1899 and appointed to the Vatican bureaucracy in 1901, during the pontificate of Leo XIII, who is remembered as a social liberal (his 1891 encyclical *Rerum novarum* was read as an endorsement of the labor movement) but who ruled the Church as a rigid authoritarian. To Leo XIII the Church was "a perfect society," and the Vatican was to be the living embodiment of that perfection. In his vision, the papacy would not only exert spiritual sovereignty over the religious lives of Catholics but also control Church activities in every nation—from the licensing of schools to the appointment of bishops. Such a vision required nation-states to relate to the Church through the Vatican rather than through local institutions.

Leo died in 1903, and was succeeded by Pius X, whom no one would mistake for a liberal. Famous for his condemnation of "modernism," Pius X continued the program of centralizing Church authority in an absolutist papacy. Two strategies served him well in this. One was the Oath Against Modernism, which every candidate for ordination in the world was thenceforth required to swear (it was still in force when I was ordained, in the late 1960s), and the other was a new Code of Canon Law, which would give the Pope unprecedented power over every aspect of Church life. Pacelli was one of two Vatican priests who spent more than a decade developing the code, which was finally promulgated in 1917. As Cornwell points out, Canon 218 defines the Pope's authority as "the supreme and most complete jurisdiction throughout the Church, both in matters of faith and morals and in those that affect discipline and Church government throughout the world."

In Europe, where the structures of Church and State were traditionally intermingled, with much overlap of political and religious authority (those schools, the appointment of those bishops), the implementation of this new Code of Canon Law required the cooperation of governments, which led to Pacelli's next assignment. The task of negotiating treaties—concordats—that recognized the freshly claimed prerogatives of the papacy fell to him. His first success, concluded in 1914, before the code was formally published, was in Serbia, where he negotiated a concordat that served the Pope's purposes but undercut the Catholic hierarchy in Austria. "The treaty implied the abrogation," Cornwell explains, "of the ancient protectorate rights of the Austro-Hungarian Empire over the Catholic enclave in Serbian territory." This change in Church-State relations effectively supported Serbia's political effort to move away from Austrian dominance. The concordat was signed on June 24, 1914. Four days later Archduke Franz Ferdinand, of Austria, was assassinated by an independence-minded Serb in Sarajevo. Cornwell comments,

The emotions prompted by the Serbian Concordat became part of the general groundswell of anti-Serbian anger. . . . There is no indication that Pacelli questioned the dangerous implications of the Serbian negotiations after the event. From this point of view, the episode marks the ominous beginning of Pacelli's pattern of aloofness from the far-reaching political consequences of his diplomatic actions on behalf of the Pope.

THE most important Catholic nation in Europe in the period of the First World War, even with its Protestant majority, was Germany, and in 1917, shortly after his consecration as bishop, Pacelli went to Munich as papal nuncio. Cornwell writes that his "principal task in Germany was now nothing less than the imposition, through the 1917 Code of Canon Law, of supreme papal authority over the Catholic bishops, clergy and faithful." To that end he set out to renegotiate existing concordats with the German regional states. Ultimately he hoped for a concordat with the German nation itself, one that would solidify Vatican authority, especially in the matter of the appointment of bishops. The anti-Catholic sus-

picious of Protestants and Weimar liberals were not the only obstacle to the new definition of Church authority. Germany's Catholic bishops were accustomed to holding sway in their own sphere, and the Catholic Center Party—a political organization that dated back to the nineteenth century, when it was formed to resist Otto von Bismarck's anti-Catholic Kulturkampf—was one of the most powerful institutions in Weimar. In 1919 the Center Party drew six million votes, second only to the Social Democrats. The Center Party, occupying the crucial middle ground in the mounting chaos of the Weimar era, would provide five chancellors in the ten governments that came and went from 1919 to 1933.

Catholic leaders of the party consistently rejected Pacelli's—and the Pope's—"urgings," in Cornwell's word, to stay out of coalitions with the left-wing Social Democrats. Once it was imposed on German Catholics, with the approbation of the German state, the new Code of Canon Law would end such defiance. That is the fateful background to what followed the rise of Adolf Hitler. Cornwell writes,

The acquiescence of the German people in the face of Nazism cannot be understood in its entirety without taking into account the long path, beginning as early as 1920, to the Reich Concordat of 1933; and Pacelli's crucial role in it; and Hitler's reasons for signing it. The negotiations were conducted exclusively by Pacelli on behalf of the Pope over the heads of the faithful, the clergy, and the German bishops.

The record compiled by Cornwell establishes, for example, that Pacelli "patently lied" to Cardinal Michael Faulhaber, the archbishop of Munich, to keep him in ignorance. "When Hitler became Pacelli's partner in negotiations," Cornwell observes, "the concordat thus became the supreme act of two authoritarians, while the supposed beneficiaries were correspondingly weakened, undermined, and neutralized." The first true beneficiary was Hitler himself: the Reichskonkordat, agreed to on July 8, 1933, was his first bilateral treaty with a foreign power, and as such gave him much-needed international prestige, whether the Vatican intended it or not. (The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* published a statement on July 2 saying that the concordat implied no moral approval of Nazism, and

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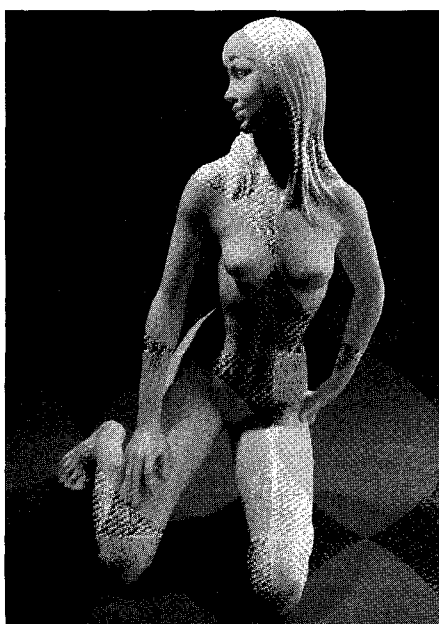
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Pacelli would make the same point later.) Yet the price Hitler demanded for the concordat was stiff—the complete withdrawal from politics (and therefore from any possible resistance to the Nazis) of all Catholics as *Catholics*. On July 4 the leader of the Catholic Center Party, Heinrich Brüning, who had served as Germany's Chancellor from 1930 to 1932, had "agreed with bitterness in his heart to dissolve the party." Hitler wanted the Center Party gone because it represented the last potential impediment to his program. It appears that Pacelli wanted it gone for the sake of his own program. (Defenders of the Vatican have argued that it did not want the Center Party dissolved, but Cornwell makes an opposite case, tied to Pacelli's maneuvering.) That month the Center Party ceased to exist.

The Reichskonkordat effectively removed the German Catholic Church—which had successfully rolled back Bismarck's Kulturkampf, and which had opposed the rise of Nazism, generally barring party members from receiving holy communion into 1933—from any continued role of opposition to Hitler. More than that, as Hitler told his cabinet on July 14, it established a context that would be "especially significant in the urgent struggle against international Jewry." Cornwell comments, "This was the reality of the moral abyss into which Pacelli, the future Pontiff, had led the once great and proud German Catholic Church."

PACELLI became Pope in 1939. As is well known, he did not openly denounce Nazi anti-Semitism as such, although he condemned Nazi racism in more general terms. Nor did he explicitly refer to the Final Solution as it unfolded, even though he was one of the first leaders outside German-controlled Europe to be informed of its full dimensions. On October 16, 1943, more than 1,200 Jews were arrested by German forces in the Jewish district of Rome, at the foot of the Vatican hill. Within a week more than a thousand of those arrested had been taken to Auschwitz and gassed. Critics of Pius XII's silence have pointed to this event as emblematic of his failure; his defenders, giving equal emphasis to it, insist that had it not been for the Pope's urgent behind-the-scenes intervention (he dispatched his Secretary of State, Cardinal Luigi Maglione, to protest to the German ambassador to the Vatican, Ernst von Weizäcker,

er, and a German bishop resident in Rome conveyed the Pope's concern to German military authorities), thousands more Roman Jews would have been seized. The Vatican offered shelter to hundreds of Jewish fugitives, within Vatican City and in other Church institutions under Vatican control. Cornwell's examination of relevant documents, however, leads him to conclude that papal defenders exaggerate the significance of measures taken in behalf of Jews. Other scholars—notably John Morely, the author of *Vatican Diplomacy and the Jews During the Holocaust 1939–1943* (1980)—have asserted that characterizing Vatican action on this occasion as "protest" seems dubious. In a presentation to a group of Jewish and Catholic scholars last March, Morely offered a close reading of Maglione's own account of what took place in his October 16 meeting with Weizäcker, summarizing it this way: "There was neither confrontation, nor criticism, nor a plea for justice." According to Maglione, Vatican intervention led to the release of many Jews, and the Pope's defenders have made much of that claim, but Cornwell dismisses it as "untruthful." And as for Vatican pressure stopping the roundup of Jews, more than a thousand additional Jews were arrested after October 16. Neither Pacelli nor his Secretary of State openly protested any of this. "Their failure to speak or act," Cornwell writes, "astonished the German leadership in the city."

Critics of Pius XII have accounted for his failure to challenge Hitler more directly, even on the matter of the Jewish genocide, by charging him with cowardice, or with quietly held Nazi sympathies, but Cornwell shows that neither was the case. Pius XII's courage, and his contempt for Hitler, were demonstrated by his active participation, early in his pontificate, in a plot to overthrow the German dictator. From late 1939 through March of 1940 Pius XII served as a channel of communication between a group of anti-Hitler German army chiefs, led by General Ludwig Beck, and the British government, represented by Britain's Vatican minister, Francis d'Arcy Osborne. The Germans indicated their readiness to stage a coup and end the war, but only with assurances from London that the Munich settlement would be honored. For whatever reason, the British failed to pick up on the initiative. Nonetheless, the



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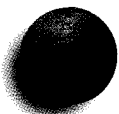
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plotters and the Pope himself had acted in ways that Hitler, had he learned of them, would have savagely punished. This episode leads Cornwell to a firm conclusion about Pacelli: "Pusillanimity and indecisiveness—shortcomings that would be cited to extenuate his subsequent silence and inaction in other matters—were hardly in his nature."

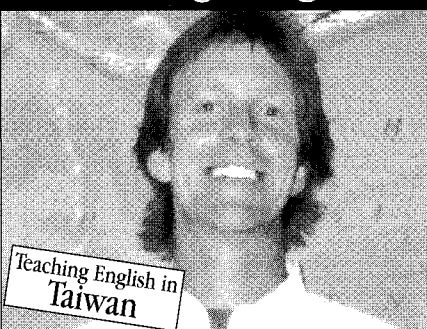
THEN what accounts for the Pope's wartime record—for his silence not only in the face of the Final Solution but also in full knowledge of the Nazi atrocities against Catholic Poland? For his repeated efforts to prevent the Allies from bombing Rome, alongside his relative inaction regarding the bombing of other cities, and also for his firm support for Catholic nationalism in Croatia, even after the Ustache regime revealed itself as grotesquely genocidal? The Pius XII that emerges from the pages of *Hitler's Pope* was no coward and no crypto-Nazi. He was not indifferent to the suffering of innocents, nor was he unaffected by the murderous policies of the Nazis in occupied Europe. If the arguments that his defenders base on his secret maneuvering ("the wisdom of his diplomacy," as *We Remember* deems it) fall short, as in Cornwell's convincing account they do, what explains this Pope's historic failure?

Cornwell suggests that Pius XII's particular indifference to the fate of the Jews (he apparently never used the word "Jew" in any of his wartime pronouncements, apparently never once used the word "anti-Semitism") was related to his attitude toward the Jewish people.

Until now, it has not been possible to relate the full history of Pacelli's career as diplomat and as Cardinal Secretary of State. The new material made available in this narrative, however, reveals Pacelli's long-standing anti-Jewishness, indicating that he failed to be gripped with moral outrage by the plight of the Jews.

Certainly, from the Reichskonkordat forward (that treaty included an annex granting some protection to Jews who had converted to Catholicism but explicitly defining the fate of other Jews as Germany's "internal affair," about which the Church would have nothing to say) Pacelli showed no sign of seeing Jews as within the Catholic circle of concern. And there are other indications (he accepted

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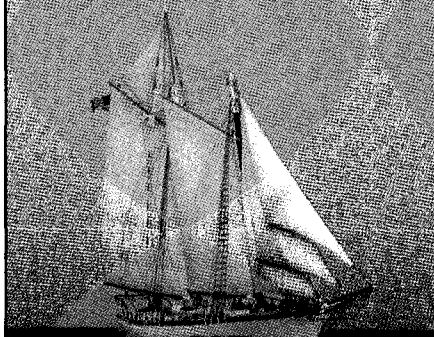
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the stereotypical association of the Jew with Bolshevism) that Pacelli regarded Jews as a contemporary as well as an ancient enemy of the Church.

But a factor more important even than anti-Semitism accounts for Pacelli's early failings as a diplomat and his later failings as a Pope, and that was his determination to put the accumulation and defense of papal power above everything else—above the fate of the Jews, and even above the fate of the Catholic Church elsewhere in Europe. "Was there something in the modern ideology of papal power," Cornwell asks, "that encouraged the Holy See to acquiesce in the face of Hitler's evil, rather than oppose it?" The answer to this awful question, it seems increasingly clear, is yes.

And that is why the unfinished story of Pius XII matters so much—especially to Catholics. Even though the ancient Christian anti-Semitism that fueled the Nazi program has been roundly repudiated by the Church, "the modern ideology of papal power" that helped to make the hatred of Jews so lethal in this century still marks

Roman Catholicism. And that is the meaning of the campaign to make Pius XII a saint despite everything. It is apparently a cause dear to the heart of John Paul II, who has single-handedly restored the spirit of papal absolutism. Yet that campaign contradicts John Paul's equally firm assertion of the moral meaning of the new millennium, and the Catholic Church's obligation to enter it in a spirit of repentance and truth.

The story of Eugenio Pacelli, and of the modern papacy, began with Pius X, whose condemnation of modernism and commissioning of the Vatican-dominated Code of Canon Law set the Catholic Church on its disastrous twentieth-century course. That Pope gave Pacelli his mission in life—the expansion of power, which became his moral undoing. It is an omen, perhaps, that Pacelli repaid his patron, and reified his view of the Church, by canonizing Pius X in 1954. *Hitler's Pope* makes it clear that if Pacelli himself is to be canonized now, the Church will have sealed its second millennium with a lie, and readied its third for new disasters. ☛

BRIEF REVIEWS



The Conspiracy of Ignorance: The Failure of American Public Schools

by Martin L. Gross.
*HarperCollins, 308 pages,
\$25.00.*

Mr. Gross, an acid critic of public affairs, uses a wide array of statistics and a certain amount of anecdote and quotation to demonstrate that our school system has fallen into the hands of people with small ambitions and second-rate brains. The news media tend to cover this subject piecemeal—a poor showing on the latest international test of this or that. Mr. Gross covers the field and presents a comprehensive picture of a bad situation from respectable historical root to current

wilting branch. He offers a list of possible corrections, but warns that reforms will not be easy. The status quo provides a safe haven for the lazy, the dull-witted, and the red-tape weavers. A lot of parents will have to organize and raise a lot of protest if major changes are to occur. Mr. Gross has issued a call to arms.

Illumination and Night Glare

by Carson McCullers,
edited and with an introduction
by Carlos L. Dews.
Wisconsin, 280 pages, \$24.95.

Seven months before her death, in 1967, McCullers told an interviewer that she planned an autobiography because she "became an established literary figure

overnight, and I was much too young to understand what happened to me or the responsibility it entailed"; she hoped that her story might prepare future artists to accept such a situation better. This generous scheme was never carried out. Crippled by a series of strokes, reduced to slow and painful dictation, McCullers was unable to establish any direct connection between early success and juvenile folly, which appears to have consisted of a bad marriage—an error too common to be attributed to literary position. The "Illumination" of the title refers to the moments in which she either recognized the makings of a story or saw how to construct recalcitrant material. There has to have been a process leading to such insights, but this she didn't explore. Probably no fiction writer should be expected to undertake psychological archaeology, much less reveal the content of such a dig. Regardless of its limitations, this autobiography was a heroic last-ditch effort. It might have been a very different book if McCullers had lived to finish it.

The Crime of Olga Arbyelina

by Andrei Makine,
translated by Geoffrey Strachan.
Arcade, 256 pages, \$24.95.

Olga, Princess Arbyelina, first appears in 1947, drenched and half naked, sitting dazedly on a riverbank beside a dead man. The French police, after overhauling everyone in the odd little colony of Russian expatriates where Olga manages the library, decide that the death was an accident and dismiss Olga's claim that she killed the man. The question that intrigues the reader is what crime, if any, Olga has committed, and why. Mr. Makine explores that problem with an interweaving of history and personal character. His heroine's life has been a road of wild ups and downs. Along the way she has lost the ability to appreciate or judge events. She sees episodes as random, without logical cause or predictable result. She retains, however, an intense sensitivity to atmosphere, which entitles Mr. Makine to make brilliant use of his ability to evoke the natural world of changing skies and shifting winds. One can smell wet woods and hear the rustle of falling snow in his prose. The semi-detachment that has enabled Olga

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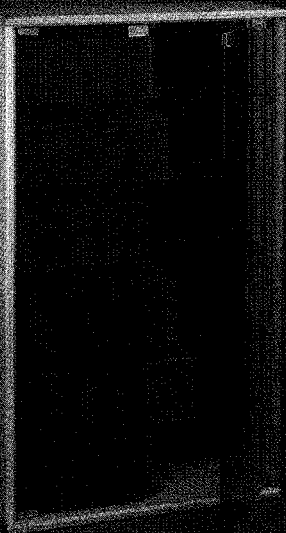
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to survive years of confusion finally fails her, and it is left to the reader to decide whether she is a criminal or a victim.

'Tis

by Frank McCourt.
Scribner, 367 pages, \$26.00.

The author of *Angela's Ashes* continues that beguiling memoir with an account of his life in America. He arrived in New York at the age of nineteen, with bad teeth, an eye infection, no proper education, no connections, and very little money. One expectation was fulfilled: the place was indeed thick with young people whose teeth were "like snow drops." Being a great storyteller, Mr. McCourt makes his greenhorn bumbblings marvelously entertaining. Who else could manage a disastrous entanglement with Olivier's *Hamlet* and lemon-meringue pie?

At the Full and Change of the Moon

by Dionne Brand.
Grove, 304 pages, \$24.00.

The author is a poet, which may account for a style that at times produces striking effects but more often seems to impose an ornamental screen between the reader and the novel's characters. Those characters are the scattered descendants of an African slave in Trinidad, surviving, well or badly, far from Africa. Their story deserves more grunge and grit than Ms. Brand allows.

The Sisters of Henry VIII

by Maria Perry.
St. Martin's, 272 pages, \$23.95.

Henry's sister Margaret was married to James IV of Scotland, who maintained an exceptional number of royal bastards, got himself killed at Flodden Field, and left his widow to cope with Scotland's disorderly nobility. Her subsequent marital adventures scandalized her brother. Mary, the younger sister, was married to Louis XII of France, who was elderly and ailing, and soon died—probably quite happy. Mary then married an Englishman of her own choice, although much diplomacy and bad temper were involved. Tudor England was as addicted to record-keeping as modern Washington. Ms. Perry's

work, which is essentially a history of the Tudor family, is so swathed in brocade and cloth of gold that it is sometimes difficult to remember that there were real people behind the accounting department.

The Palladium of Justice

by Leonard W. Levy.
Ivan R. Dee, 128 pages,
\$18.95.

Mr. Levy, a legal scholar and historian, briskly and clearly explains the "Origins of Trial by Jury." Anyone interested in how our courts became what they are, and why they do what they do, will find his book enlightening.

The Essential New English Canaan

by Thomas Morton of "Merrymount,"
edited by Jack Dempsey.
Digital Scanning, Inc., 650 pages,
\$59.95/\$39.95.

Morton's account of the New World, published in 1637, was in three sections: a description of the native peoples, a survey of the "commodities" (meaning potential sources of profit) available in the area, and the story of his own experiences, which were unfortunate. Morton liked and respected the Indians. He set up a trading post known as Merrymount. He entertained Indians around a Maypole. From the point of view of his Puritan neighbors, he incited heathenish orgies and cut into the beaver trade. They called him a gun runner and twice shipped him back to England. Morton has been mined by historians for three centuries, but his original text—lively, opinionated, and often witty—lurks in rare-book departments. Dr. Dempsey's discreetly modernized, lavishly annotated version is worth attention. If one accepts the claim that Morton was "America's first poet in English" (he did write verse), we started below scratch.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

Recent books by Atlantic authors:

Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City by Elijah Anderson. Norton, 352 pages, \$25.95. A portion of this book first appeared as "The Code of the Streets," *The Atlantic's* cover article for May, 1994.



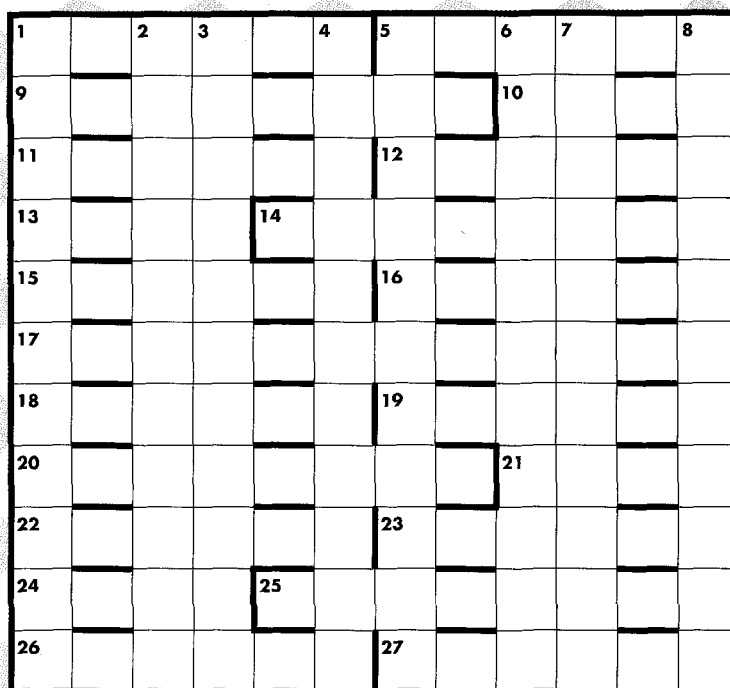
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Cycles

This puzzle's Down clues are given column by column; their answers (one or two per column) cycle downward from an unknown square, exit at the bottom, and continue from the top of the column back to the starting point, using all eleven squares. Every Down clue answer contains one letter too many for its spot in the grid; each of these extra letters should be removed to the nearest blank, above or below the grid. (Some blanks will be left unoccupied.) The letters picked out in this way will produce two items that may fittingly start the two-word procedure to be deduced at 17 Across. All other Across entries are clued normally. Clue answers include five capitalized entries.

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 106.



Across

1. Good cycle's base (6)
5. Point around tip of elbow joint (6)
9. Castle containing completely wet, rubbery material (8)
10. Expected receiving king and noble (4)
11. Plain speaker's pace (6)
12. Run a story that misrepresents defensive athlete (6)
13. Backed correct tendency (4)
14. Take the place of selfless petitioner? (8)
15. Red Sea swimming eliminated (6)
16. God with a crown and ring (6)
17. *See Instructions*
18. Microorganism found in a bee or bats (6)
19. Squeal two times in the middle of recital (6)

20. Sanctimonious sort playing harp, I notice (8)
21. Star involved in love game (4)
22. Doubled one's initial thirst for brew (6)
23. Eruption on Sicily's eastern third throwing caution to the wind (6)
24. Centers for research retrievers (4)
25. Strong affections for one among Pop's boys (8)
26. Spilled pail on something in a car engine (3,3)
27. License outdoor canopy for mikes and speakers? (6)

Down

1. Houdini, for one sec, confounded champion (12)
2. Gore, taking gym class, got a lucky hit (7)

3. Like Swiss cheese, soup, or nuts (6)
4. Takes apart firearm, missing the first deer (6)
5. Lightly touch shorebird model (7)
6. Went to Virgin Islands locale with Dee (7)
7. Promising help of radical, including head of union (7)
8. Single so far, getting rest, traveling, and living well (2,4,6)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.

WORD IMPROVISATION

by J. E. Lighter

Bugaboo

BE assured: in what follows, you won't be subjected to any descriptions or analysis of the Y2K problem. What's of interest here is a question of origins: whence the *bug* in "millennium bug"? Since the prospect of electronic cataclysm has many people *antsy* (from the 1930s phrase *ants in your pants*), it's a good time to consider the convergence of entomology and etymology.

The word *bug*, meaning "insect," settled snugly into English centuries ago—but no one knows precisely how it got there. Spontaneous generation? The best theory may be that it's a relative of the Old English *budde*, a beetle, but the Welsh *bwg* (which sounds a lot like the nickname of the 1960s and 1970s Orioles first baseman "Boog" Powell, and means "an object of fear, a terror") may be crawling around in there as well. "Thou shalt not nede to be afracyd for eny bugges by night," advises the Ninety-first Psalm in Coverdale's Bible translation of 1535—and Coverdale wasn't thinking of insects. He was thinking of something more like *bugaboos*, which are "imaginary objects of fear."

Snug as a bug in a rug has been a folk simile for at least two centuries; the indulgent *cute as a bug's ear* is a little more recent. The American jocular phrase *knee-high to a grasshopper* (usually descriptive of the short stature of extreme youth) had made its debut in print by 1905. Soldiers and buffalo skinners swore at *graybacks* (lice), pests that turned into the *cooties* and *seam squirrels* of the First World War (the Malay word *kutu* is the suggested etymon for *cootie*)—though the British and the Australians just as often called

them *chatts*. Kids in the 1950s often thought of *cooties* as some form of contagion rather than as insects like the one memorably apostrophized by Robert Burns in "To a Louse" (1786). His addressing it as "Ye crowlin' ferlie" ("You crawling wonder") suggests a playful yet appropriately *bug-eyed* attitude.

Edgar Allan Poe wrote "The Gold Bug" in 1843. By 1868 advocates of the U.S. gold standard were termed *gold-bugs*; eventually the combining form *-bug* metamorphosed into something meaning "fan or enthusiast," and *bugs* came to be an adject-

tive equivalent to "crazy." (*Bugs Bunny*, the Warner Bros. crazy-like-a-fox rabbit, was named for the animator Ben "Bugs" Hardaway; the name first appeared in an animated cartoon in 1941.) By 1950 *bug out* meant "run away"; lately it has come to mean "behave crazily; go wild."

Bugs are little in life, bigger in movies like *Them!* (1954), which featured giant ants, in an epoch when kids *bugged* Mom and Dad for their own plastic ant farms; *Starship Troopers* (1997), with "arachnids" that seem to have been spawned by Mack trucks and garbage disposals; and *Wild Wild West* (1999), with a robot spider that looks like the Brooklyn Bridge on a tear.

Midway in stature between actual bugs and movie megabugs is the Volkswagen *Beetle*. The *bug* manufactured by Volkswagen experienced breakthrough sales in

the United States in the early 1960s in large part because of its reliability, its lack of design flaws or mechanical defects—its lack of *bugs*, in other words. (Another important reason was the Doyle Dane Bernbach agency's classic series of understated ads with the headline "Think Small.") The *bugs* that plague mechanical, electrical, and electronic systems are often tiny or invisible—like the microbial *bugs* that make you feel queasy or worse. Watergate *bugs*—listening devices—made the whole country queasy. Performance anxiety, however, is more likely to lead to *butterflies in your stomach*, a twentieth-century idiom often shortened to just plain *butterflies*. But it's normal to have some butterflies about the future. As somebody once said, "Some days you're the windshield, some days you're the *bug*."

Investigations of slang
by the editor of the
Random House Historical Dictionary
of American Slang

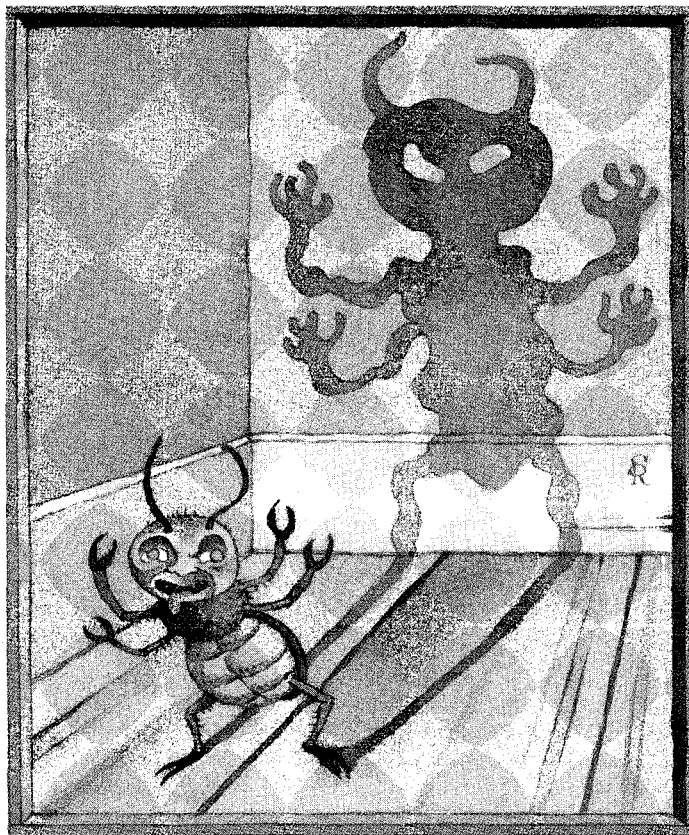


Illustration by Sergio Ruzzier

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